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Kind regards

MARIE

OR

GLIMPSES OF LIFE IN FRANCE.

Marie Ryan Trévorec

"

"Spät erklingt was früh erklang,
Glück und Unglück wird Gesang."

GOETHE.

"Was eine lange weite Strecke,
Im Leben von einander stand,
Das kömmt nun unter eine Decke,
Dem guten Leser in die Hand."

GOETHE.

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TO

THE REVEREND DAVID JAMES STEWART, M.A.,

ONE OF HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

MY DEAR MR. STEWART,

I offer you a little book which would not have been written but for you. It was your desire that what you had heard me tell of the impressions left on my mind by visits to France, now ranging over a long time and the greater part of the country, should be wrought into as lively a story, with as much bustle of incident and change of characters as I could compass within a very small volume. Your writer began with no other wish than that of turning out a task set by you as neatly as was feasible. There must, however, be some occult power in *ink* which is at present imperfectly recognised; Luther's inkstand may not have been hurled at the Foe as a missile, but as a counter-charm. Perhaps there is more than we think in the Eastern mode of sorcery by gazing into a plash of ink in the palm of an infant's hand. I stirred the little pool of my inkstand with a quill, and shapes appeared who would have it that they

had something to say. I shall be proud, indeed, if you think them worth hearing, for, if I may alter by one word a sentence in a dedication to a book of our own days, you are "the severest of critics, but a perfect" friend.

You must admit that I have followed your behest to be not too learned or didactic. After reading Jules Favre's recent speech in the "Corps Législatif," you will, I am sure, allow that the collisions between my characters and the French official system are underdrawn. A Frenchman in Mr. Lalor's situation would have fared worse. After telling you that I began the tale as a task, I cannot fail to add that the work soon became play, and that your suggesting it is one of the many kindnesses, old and new, for which you are thanked now and ever by

THE WRITER.

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MARIE.

My name is Mary, but where I am now living they call me "Marie," for they speak French, not English, as I do, who am an Irish girl by birth; at least, my parents were Irish. I may have been born in Lancashire; for, when I can first remember anything, my father was working at the Liverpool Docks as a ship's carpenter. One of my brothers worked with him, the other went to sea. My mother had been a servant in good places, and learnt the English ways, so that she kept all about her clean and tidy. When very young, I was taken by a lady of a family in which she had lived, and was happy in finding a good master and mistress, with whom I stayed all the years I was in service.

By the time I was grown up, my master left off trade, being now rich, and without children. He broke up

house, and of all the servants kept only me to wait on Mrs. Richards.

I said "good-bye" to Father and Mother, and we went travelling about, living six months here and six months there, mostly where there were waters with a bad taste, which were said to be good for the health.

I seldom wrote home, and hardly ever got a letter. Poor people found it dear to pay the postage in those days, and you looked for some great news to make it worth your while.

We were staying at Buxton, when my brother wrote to tell me of the death of my poor father, and that mother had packed up all she had, and gone to live with him in the Isle of Man, where he was then working. He begged me to go and nurse her, and mind his house, for she was too weak and ill to do much. It seemed hard to have paid above a shilling for such poor news. I sat down and cried, tossed about between my duty to my mother and my liking for my place. My mistress was very sorry too, but thought I must go, and my master said there could not be a doubt about it.

Next day they told me it made little matter to them where they went. They had heard the Isle of Man was healthy. They would take me there, and make some stay.

"And mind, Mary," said my master, "you must pick up a Manx cat without a tail for your mistress

to give to an old aunt of hers, who is crazy about pets."

I thought he said this to make me smile, for I was still very downcast. He had a merry way with him at all times.

After crossing the sea, we reached Douglas, the chief town in the Isle of Man. Mr. and Mrs. Richards took lodgings, and I went to my friends. My brother had good wages, and lived in comfort. He was a kind son to my mother, though hasty and stubborn in temper.

My poor mother only lived a month after my coming. She took to her bed when she found I knew how to manage. I did my best for her and my brother. So, after her burial, he said there was no need for me to go back to service. He had no thought of marrying. I might stay and keep his house, if I would.

At first, I liked being nearly mistress, but after a while I did not find it so pleasant. He brought more people to the house than he could have done when mother was lying ill, and there was one young man who, it seemed to me, was always coming.

My brother thought a great deal of him. I did not like him or dislike him, until he asked me to become his wife; then I felt quite set against him. I could give no good reason for this feeling; so, at least, my brother said. He liked him, and thought much of his being a tradesman in a small way, and said if I would

marry him we could all keep house together. So I said "yes;" but after saying "yes," I felt more set against the match than ever. I took to moping, and was so cross by fits and starts, that I vexed my brother till he grew stubborn. "If I did not keep my word," he told me, "he would no longer look on me as a sister."

We never heard of my other brother, so it seemed hard to quarrel with my only relation. I should have been glad to vex the young man, but he would not take offence, though I have a tongue, and can use it when I will.

Another trouble was, that my master and mistress were about to leave the island. They talked of spending the winter in France, but first they were to visit the rich old aunt, of whom I had heard strange accounts.

"We are to sail by the next packet," said my mistress; "and, oh Mary, you have never found me a cat!"

I had had other things to mind, and had, besides, soon ceased to notice what at first seemed very odd, that there should be a breed of cats in that island having long hind legs and no tails.

We become used to almost anything. On first coming, I used to wonder if it was the custom of the country to cut off the cats' tails when they were young; afterwards I hardly saw the difference between them and others.

Well, as I was going sadly home, a fine young cat of this kind jumped into my arms, and laid its head against me, purring as if I were an old friend it had not seen for long, and was very glad to see. After stroking it a little, I put it down. It followed me to our door, and sat upon the step the greater part of the day, asking to come in as plainly as any one could.

When I had words with my brother, which I am sorry to say was often the case just then, for he and his friend were teasing me to name the wedding-day, I had got into a way of wandering out and walking till so tired that I was forced to return. Next day, after one of these quarrels, as I was going with a heavy heart to bid good-bye to my master and mistress, who were to sail next morning, just about the same spot up jumped the same cat into my arms again. I thought, here is a cat for the "old lady;" but seeing a woman come out of a house who called "puss, puss!" I put it down. The cat followed me a little way, then I lost sight of it.

My mistress did all she could to keep up my heart, and told me I might be much happier than I was disposed to fancy.

I replied, I should be happy if I were going with them. She said, she should like it too, but she could not take upon herself to advise me to break the word I had given.

So that night, being too low in spirits to fly out

of temper, I let my brother and the young man fix a day for the wedding.

Next morning, when I had seen my brother out of the house, I put on my bonnet, thinking to walk till I felt more settled. I knew my brother meant to speak to the priest some time in the day, and then there would be no going back for me.

As I went out, I saw the cat which had taken such a fancy to me lying coiled on our door-step, and I took it up, meaning to give it back to its owner.

The young woman I had seen the day before was at her door, and I asked her if that cat was hers.

She said, "No, it was a poor thing without a home. She had found it behind a water-butt in her yard. She had a cat, and could not keep two. Sometimes it got food, and sometimes it got none."

Seeing poor puss clung so to me, I said, "I will try if it will stay with us," and turned round to take it home.

Sometimes I could fancy it was sent to lead me whither I was to go, for I had scarcely gone a step before it came into my mind that there was still more than an hour before the packet sailed, and no one to hinder my going in it.

I made haste home, ran upstairs, caught hold of a few clothes, which I stuffed into a carpet bag, leaving my boxes behind me. I should have liked to have taken the six silver tea-spoons my mother gave me in her ill-

ness, and the brass candlesticks that used to shine over our chimney when I was a child, and the old warming-pan she valued so highly. She had said they were to be mine; but, as I was leaving my brother in anger, I thought he should not have to say that I had taken anything out of his house. So I took nothing but my carpet bag and the cat, and, with one on each arm, ran all the way to the quay. The plank was being moved from the side of the ship, and, if I had been a minute later, I should have been left behind.

My master and mistress were below. I do not know how I managed to find my way to the cabin, for when I got there I turned quite silly, laughing and crying, and when my master said with surprise, "Why, Mary, what can have brought you here?" I had nothing wiser to answer, than, "Please, sir, I have brought a cat without a tail!"

We had a rough passage, having been sixteen hours in crossing. I was so ill that I did not think of brother or lover. Nothing seemed of any account to me but getting on land again. My mistress was very ill, too, and my master felt bound to let her rest a couple of nights at Liverpool before we went on to London. I kept close, and did not go to see any one I knew, for I had a notion that my brother might claim me. I fell into my old place quite easily, and my mistress said she had longed to urge me to leave with her; but my

master had told her not to meddle in the matter. London was not strange to me, as I had been there before; but there were strange ways in the house to which we went. It was quite in the outskirts of London, bordering upon the country, for wherever Mrs. Smith, my mistress's aunt, went, her first want was to find a field near her house for a favourite donkey, from whom she could not make up her mind to be parted. This donkey was old, and quite blind. A boy was kept to feed him and lead him for a gentle walk daily, and a female servant, who had lived with her mistress as long as the donkey, used to walk by his side to see that the boy did not ride him. Two old dogs, so fat that they could hardly waddle, made up the party. The old lady would have me walk with them, rather against my will. I did not like the boys to make fun of us all as they did. Mrs. Smith said she wished me to go to talk to her maid. It kept up her donkey's spirits to hear a little chat and stir going on about him. I did wonder how my master, even with his easy temper, kept his patience with Mrs. Smith. Even before we came she had taken a whim into her head of going to France with us, and taking the donkey. There was no turning her from it. She had made all her plans, she said. She had fulfilled a duty in going to Tunbridge Wells to visit the graves of some canaries she had buried there, and there was now nothing to delay her. She had given my poor cat a

kind welcome, but "Joseph," as she called the donkey, was clearly the first person in her house. My master urged her to take the cat, if she must have some four-footed companion, and leave the donkey behind. The cat, he said, had made a voyage already, but there was no telling how sea-sickness might affect the donkey.

"That," said Mrs. Smith, "was true, but there was as much chance it might do him good as harm."

He was an old friend from whom she could not be parted. The cat was young and lively. It would amuse her dogs in her absence. So a cook who had lived with her at Tunbridge Wells came to take care of the house, the dogs, and a number of birds, and the donkey, the boy, and the old servant were got ready for the journey.

Mrs. Smith had never yet travelled by railroad. She agreed to do so now, but said she should take her own carriage and sit in it. A rusty old carriage was dragged out and packed with her boxes, and one morning we all started from the London Bridge Station. My master and mistress went like other people, but Mrs. Smith sat aloft in her carriage with her maid behind her. The donkey had a horse-box to himself, and his boy was with him. At a station some distance from London the train was divided, and, looking out of the carriage-window, I saw the pen in which was the donkey shunted to a siding. I clapped my hands for joy, trusting we might lose him altogether; but I did not yet know Mrs.

Smith. She, too, saw the sight, and, in a very shrill voice, cried, "Stop the train this moment!" just as the railway-whistle, which was still shriller, showed the train to be moving on.

At the next large station she came down from her carriage, and meeting my master on the platform said, "Richards, come with me to the person who professes to manage this ill-conducted concern."

When she saw the station-master she said, "I have a complaint to lodge. Your train, as you call it, went off with unwarrantable rapidity, leaving an old and faithful servant, and, I may say, friend of mine, standing at the last station."

The station-master stared when he found what it all meant, but some looks and words passed between him and my master which helped to arrange matters. Mrs. Smith had begun by ordering that the train should at once return to fetch the donkey. She ended by mounting to her carriage, on my master's promise to remain at the station till the next up-train, and himself go in it to recover the boy, as he put it—the donkey, as she did.

We were all to go on to Folkestone. My mistress called me into the carriage to sit with her, now she had lost my master. Poor thing! she could not help crying; she was so tired and fretted with her aunt's whims, and sorry my master should be so teased; but he was a pleasant gentleman, and turned it to fun.

Well, at last we were all lodged in a hotel. Mrs. Smith was very gloomy all the evening. She said she could not help fancying what must be poor Joseph's feelings. It was well he knew his mistress. Her, at least, she thought he could not doubt. It was the first time she had been able to feel some comfort in his being blind. He would be less alive to the horrors of his situation.

Of my master's wearisome and absurd situation she never seemed to think. Her maid said that was no wonder, for the late Mr. Smith and the donkey both grew infirm about the same time, and far more thought was taken for the latter. This maid was sent to meet each train. Mrs. Smith herself went to choose him a nice horse-box in the inn.

It was late before my master arrived with the boy and the donkey. Mrs. Smith thanked him in a solemn way, and said she should never forget he had rescued Joseph. My master, laughing over it all with my mistress, said he did hope she would remember his day's work when she made her will. My mistress had lost heart for travelling if Joseph was to be of the party, and begged Mr. Richards to contrive some way of staying behind. He said the thing would come to an end of itself in a day or two. My mistress was not so sure.

The next few days we spent at Folkestone. My master put off crossing the sea in hopes some of the

many things he brought forward might alarm Mrs. Smith, and induce her to give up the voyage. She, however, was as obstinate as Joseph, and met everything that could be said. If my master said with a solemn face that he thought a sea-voyage might be too much for the donkey after the shock to his nerves on the railway, she would reply that he had a sound constitution and great power of rallying. The strange part was that she was not more than a little odd in other things, and very keen about money matters.

At times I used to think she was only perverse, and did it to try all about her, and see how far she could make them all wait upon her whims for the sake of her riches.

If we could not contrive to leave Joseph behind, we did manage better with the old carriage. It left itself behind after this way :—As Mrs. Smith was taking an airing, the dickey in which her maid and I were sitting broke off from the body of the carriage, and fell down with us into the road. We screamed, as you may suppose. Both of us were bruised, the maid rather badly, but her mistress went on with her drive, leaving us to walk back to Folkestone as well as we could. She said it would be the last time she should set foot in her carriage. She had meant to take it to France, but she now saw it had done its work. She did not regret it, as it had died a natural death. So, ordering the driver

to put the fragments (as she called the dickey) into a little copse by the side of the road, and "leave them to moulder away in peace," she went on, because "she never changed her plans," and left us to hobble home.

"One thing less to look after," said my master, and made up his mind to cross next morning. "Who knows but Joseph may die, and be buried at sea?"

The old carriage was left in a corner of the stables—"decently interred," as my master said, and the ostler, who had made many jokes about the "Harab steed" put under his care, was charged to give Joseph an extra feed to prepare him for the trials of the voyage. All the fun that had been made of our party before was nothing to the mirth we caused when the donkey had to be got on board the steamboat. He knew there was something out of the common; so he would not stir, but stood stock-still till he drew a crowd about him. One man who wished to help us fetched a thick stick, and the little boys sang a song they had just then, beginning:

> "If I had a donkey wot wouldn't go,
> Do you think I would wallop him?—No, no, no!"

"Most certainly not!" cried Mrs. Smith; "down with that stick, man! Take a lesson from those good little boys. Will you, sir" (here she spoke to the captain, who had come to see what the bustle was about, and was whistling very hard)—"will you, sir, cause me to be

furnished with a biscuit? I will then myself lead in this docile creature."

The biscuit was brought, the donkey snuffed it, and followed his mistress to the pen set aside for him on deck.

On hearing that Mr. Richards meant to stay on deck, Mrs. Smith went down to the ladies' cabin. The steward asked her to choose a berth or a place on the sofa. She replied: "Did he think a woman of her size could lie on a thing that was no wider than a plank?" She was very stoutly made, that was certain. It ended by her sitting down on the floor, setting her back against the mast which went through the cabin, and drawing together all the other ladies' bags and bandboxes to stay herself, and make her place more easy. One young lady, who had a new bonnet in a deal box, saw her draw it up to prop her elbow, and took fright, thinking her weight might break the lid. She rose, though she looked very ill, and asked for her box. Mrs. Smith gave her a stern look, but withdrew her arm, and, turning to my mistress, said:

"Don't you be sea-sick, Anne; only fools are sea-sick."

I suppose we were all fools but Mrs. Smith. Her maid was the worst of all, and, though she looked firm, and held her little pet canary's cage steadily on her knee, she did not offer to move, but, of all people, picked out me, who could hardly stand when I rose, to go on

deck and bring her word how Joseph was bearing the voyage. I did get up and stumble to a seat. By-and-by my master saw me, and told me to stay where I was, and keep quiet. Then up came the steward. He said a stout lady below had sent him to ask how a party by the name of Joseph was getting on. Mr. Richards replied:

"Tell the lady that Joseph keeps up better than any one on deck."

At last we went by the pier, and were in the port of Boulogne. We got out of the boat, no one could tell how, the bustle was so great. A troop of weather-beaten old women, strong and noisy, rushed at us, seizing all our luggage, pulling the little bags we carried out of our hands, and making signs to us to follow them to the custom-house. My master and mistress, almost deafened with their cries and the clatter of their wooden shoes, were going after them quite meekly, when Mrs. Smith, in a voice as loud as their own, called out that her donkey was not to be forgotten. My master said something in French to the women, who at once surrounded Joseph, screaming at him, and calling him names, which I was told were not quite so civil as those given him by his mistress. Mrs. Smith, on her part, cried out:

"Is Joseph to be left in the hands of those female brigands? If you allow such a thing, Richards, you are nothing to me. This is worse than the railroad."

Luckily, there was still a biscuit to be found, with which the donkey was tempted to move towards the custom-house. Some of the little French soldiers hanging about on the quay came up to see what was the matter, and so did all the little boys, and such of the women as were not busy with the luggage. The custom-house officers did not look as if they ever made fun of anything. They seemed fiercer than the soldiers. We had to pass one by one before an officer, who took away our passports. We were then taken into a bare room, where we sat down on benches. There were many people and much luggage, so that it was long before the inner door was thrown open, and we were called to enter a room in which all our boxes were set upon a kind of counter running round it. My master had told us what we might take, and what we might not, for at that time they were very strict about what they called "customs duties"—that is, money payments you had to make if you wanted to take certain things to eat or wear from England to France, or from France to England. None of us had anything liable to duty, except Mrs. Smith, who had brought some pounds of tea, made up in half-pound packets to be easy to hide. Now, in getting her keys to open her boxes, she pulled out a handful of tea with them, the paper-bag having broken in her pocket. A fierce-looking man saw it fall, and made grimaces, pointing it out to the others; and our

party at once became under watch. Others only had their things tumbled over at the tops of their boxes, but everything in every box belonging to us was turned out. This took a long time; besides, it was such a vexation! After all my pains in packing, to see my mistress's sweet new things tumbled over as if the men were making hay! There was no tea among them, but they found a few half-pounds hid away in the boxes of Mrs. Smith and her maid; and they seemed to think it repaid their trouble. When done with the boxes, they made known to my master that our persons must be searched. He said it was quite unknown to him that any tea had been brought. The lady who had done so knew nothing of their laws, and would gladly pay the duty if they would restore her tea. He gave them a hint he would add something more to be let off without further trouble.

At that time many people gave them bribes that their luggage might not be disturbed. However, too many pairs of eyes had seen the tea, so my master was marched off by a man, and we by women, and searched as if we were thieves. Mrs. Smith offered to give them up the tea she had about her person; but they liked better to find it.

While the women were jabbering, and we servants crying, Mrs. Smith went on making solemn remarks in English, to show it was the duty of the French

to have good and cheap tea instead of the bad and dear stuff with which she had been told you must put up. My mistress lost patience, and begged her aunt not to go on talking to people who did not understand one word of what she said.

At last all the tea was found, and taken to the head of the office, who filled up some papers about it. After giving the address of the boarding-house in the upper town to which we were going, we were suffered to leave.

My master was more out of humour than I had ever known him to be before. This seemed to have an effect on Mrs. Smith. She became moody, and had not a word to say, even when, on going out, we saw a little French lad mounted on Joseph's back. Joseph's own boy, who was grinning to see the French boy urge the donkey to move without the smallest success, pulled a long face when he saw his mistress; but she kept a gloomy silence all the day. My master heard some people in the crowd settling it among themselves that the donkey had done its work, and was now, no doubt, being fatted for eating. They said it was known that the fillet of a donkey was a dainty dish, better than that of a horse. It was not then, as now it is, lawful in France to sell horse-flesh for human food; but many were thought to do so, though they would have denied it with all their might.

We had not been an hour in our lodgings before a

man came from the police, one of those they call a gendarme *—a tall man with a cocked hat, and a long sword swinging at his side. It seemed that the custom-house officers had told the police that they had best keep an eye on us. The man asked where we were going, what was our object in going to each place named, and what we all did when we were at home. After getting all this from my master, all my master could get in return was that our passports should be given up to us on our reaching Paris.

The mistress of our boarding-house was an English-woman, who had married a Frenchman. At that time I pitied her very much, and Mrs. Smith's old servant thought it was better not to marry at all than to marry a Frenchman. Since then I have married a Frenchman myself, and am called "Madame" instead of "Missis," so I have not so much to say. This Madame made us very comfortable, and even found some good tea for us. It loosed Mrs. Smith's tongue again. After drinking three cups, and groaning to hear that ten shillings had been paid for a pound of it, she said:

"Richards, I have had enough of travelling. If you and Anne choose to go on, I can stay here till your return. This seems a worthy woman. I will remain

* "A gendarme," or "man-at-arms" (in English), might be said to answer to a sergeant of police in England. He has a horse, and the arms of a soldier.

with her if a suitable paddock can be found for Joseph."

This was a plan no one wished to alter. All grew more cheerful on hearing it. Next morning my master was in such good spirits that he went to the custom-house, and offered to pay all their charges if they would let Mrs. Smith have back her tea. He little thought how many more visits he would have to make, and how many forms must be filled up to get back those few pounds of tea. It went on day after day, till Joseph seemed to be a smaller trouble. A field was found for his pasture long before his mistress had a spoonful of her own tea to put in her pot. At first the chief of the custom-house stood out against such a thing having been done in ignorance, and asked for what he chose to call "a moral guarantee;" so my master had to bring one or two of his English friends who were living at Boulogne. This was not enough. So the Consul for England was brought. After one man in office had stopped the mouth of the other, there were more visits to the custom-house to sign papers and answer questions. In the end, by paying the duty, all the tea was recovered except one packet. This one of the women who searched us owned to having given as medicine to her sick husband. They were going to call her to account for it, but she stood up stoutly, and told them what a good man he was, how well he worked, but he had been

thrashed by the women on the quay for interfering with their rights by carrying a box for an Englishman, and he had never been the same man since.

"The brave man," she said, "he did not mean to injure them, those negresses, those furies. The Englishman called to him to carry his luggage, knowing no better, being one of those English; and the good man, who was gentle as a child, did as he was bid, as he did always, and for that, do you see, he was ill-treated, but frightfully ill-treated by those Algerians. She had made him tea to give him strength; it had given him courage, the dear lamb, and he could now go about his work, and do more than any man in the same way of work in Boulogne."

She spoke with so much force that all the Frenchmen about cheered her in their way, and the head of the custom-house said she was a brave woman, and her taking the tea was passed over, as the loss fell on Mr. Richards, who paid the duty on that packet as well as on the rest.

We all thought it strange to treat good tea as a drug, but I have now lived long enough in France to know that good green tea gives more help in illness than most of the messes, with no strength in them, given by their doctors. In serious illness my neighbours trust in violet tea, or tea made from the leaves and blossoms of the lime. They call these watery messes "tisane;" and

when a man's stomach is out of order they give him boiled carrots to calm it; but when my Ernest is ill, which is not often, I think of the woman at Boulogne, and I make him some strong tea, and it gives him courage; and once I gave him a little glass of brandy, but the doctor did so frighten me, I have never done it again. He said such things might do for your Englishmen, but were enough to kill a Frenchman in illness. For all that, he got better in a few days; while a Frenchman in the house, with the same ailment, was in bed for a fortnight drinking violet tea. Still, as the doctor and the neighbours made out I had gone the way to kill him, I shall only give him green tea in future, but strong it shall be.

So, seeing Mrs. Smith settled into her old ways, for a field had been found for the donkey so near that she could go and see him every day, Mr. Richards began to think of proceeding on his long journey to the city of Nantes, in Brittany.

An English lady in our boarding-house wished to join our party as far as Tours, where she was going to enter her nephew at the College. My master agreed to this out of good nature, though tired enough of fellow-travellers after Mrs. Smith and her donkey.

Poor Miss Goodman seemed lost in France, that was the fact. She spoke very little French, and her nephew, who might have helped her, having been at

school in Paris, rather tried to puzzle her more. She had brought him up, and spoiled him. He was a lively boy of about fourteen. He had not liked being changed from Paris to Tours; still, he told me that he did not so much mind going to Tours as having a woman to take him there. I was to mind and not tell, but I should see if ever his aunt reached Tours. I think the stories he told to alarm her, of the strange habits and bad living and lodging she would have to put up with, rather worked against his own end, and made her more bent on going to see that he came to no harm.

When we turned our backs on Mrs. Smith and Joseph, and took the train to Amiens, I, for one, thought we had said good-bye to our troubles, but as fast as one came to an end up sprang another. Miss Goodman had a cousin who had lived so many years at Tours that he was weary of all he ate, and longed for some English food. So Miss Goodman was taking him an English cheese and some hams. She had paid for them on landing, and thought that was the end of it; but just outside the Amiens Station the omnibus stopped, and a man put in his head, and asked if we had anything to "declare," which meant, "were we taking anything to eat or to drink into the town?" for every French town lays a toll, called the "octroi" duty, on all provisions brought within its walls. Master Tom said, in French, that his aunt had some very fine old cognac and some

capital cigars. My master cut him short, and said there were some hams and a cheese; while Miss Goodman, who had heard of our mishap, kept begging the man not to search her, and scolding her nephew for putting such things into his head.

After making us all get out of the omnibus, the octroi man climbed up to the roof, and began to rummage among the boxes. He seemed puzzled at finding no brandy, but, seeing my master was correct about the other things, he took his word about that. Miss Goodman was in great distress when she saw the man carry off her hams and cheese into his little office, and her nephew told her she would never see them more unless she went to the refreshment room next morning. Those hams would be cut into sandwiches, and stay the hunger of the people in the tidal train. It was the Government plan for supplying the refreshment rooms.

"I had forgotten all about the octroi," said my master. "The worst of it is, that this will happen at every town at which you stop."

"You would have been better at Boulogne, aunt," added Master Tom, "drinking a cup of nice tea with Mrs. Smith, and taking little French rolls to her donkey in the field. You could have eaten your own ham there, you know, and now you will have to buy a sandwich if you want to taste it."

It was not so bad as that. The man had gone to

weigh the hams and cheese. He came back with a paper stating their weight, and how much must be paid upon them. Mr. Richards told him we were merely going to stay all night, so that it was quite certain they would not be eaten in the city of Amiens. True, but we might mean them for sale. This Miss Goodman denied, with some anger, but the man was firm in saying that the money must be paid before we could pass into the town.

The French people, who had returned to their places in the omnibus, began to think it was high time they were suffered to pass into the town, for the wind was very cold; and they all put out their heads (there were five of them), and scolded. This did not disturb the man, who explained at some length that the goods might be left with him if we were going on to Paris by the line we had just left, and reclaimed (as well as the money to be paid on them) on his receipted paper being produced; or if we wished to leave Amiens in some other direction, on every side we should find the barrier of the octroi, and there we had nothing to do but to produce his receipt, and show the hams and cheese in an uncut state, in order to regain the money.

"If I were you, I should leave them with him till to-morrow," said my master, who paid the money as quickly as he could, and saw the things thrust back into the hamper.

Miss Goodman had too much fear of there being some truth in what her nephew had said about the Government and the refreshment rooms to consent to this; but at last, somehow or other, it was all done, money paid, paper signed, and we did reach our hotel.

As if it was the custom of the country, just as we were settling in came an agent of police, who sent the landlord to ask for our passports. We were to have ours restored in Paris, and we should have had no trouble if Miss Goodman could have found hers; but she was still quite bewildered with the bustle caused by the hams and cheese, and vainly searched her bag and pocket. Her nephew had his, and she wanted to know if the receipt given her at the office of the octroi would not do just as well. The landlord shook his head, and withdrew. By-and-by the man from the police came into the room to have a look at us all. We were again under doubt. He could soon see poor Miss Goodman was not much of a plotter, and he was very civil. He said, had there seemed to be cause for suspicion, she would have been sent back to Boulogne; but as the party was so respectable, she might go on to Paris, on condition that, on arriving there, she would go at once to the English embassy, and provide herself with a fresh passport, which must be presented, without loss of time, to the chief of the police, as it was his own duty forthwith to report her as travelling without a passport.

When he had left the room, Miss Goodman could hardly help crying to think she should ever have come to such a country!

"This is nothing, aunt," said Master Tom; "wait till you get to Paris! You will have a spy to follow you about, and all you say at dinner will be written down, and sent in to the Prefect of the Seine every night; and when you go to get your passport they will ask your age again, and you know you don't like any one to know how old you are."

"You are a naughty boy," said his aunt. "I believe you made me lose my passport by putting me to shame, and puzzling my head. What made you tell those French people that I had brandy and cigars among my luggage? I feel quite sure they were laughing at me when they made such a noise. My sense of duty to you brought me here, and nothing else; and that sense of duty will carry me on to Tours, for I will not leave you alone in such a country as this."

Master Tom shrugged his shoulders, a trick he had learnt from the French. I fancy he had the passport in his pocket the whole time, but that when he found the want of it would not stop his aunt going on, he contrived to slip it into a bag I carried, for there I found it next morning, and there I am sure hands of mine never put it. So I told him what I thought, but I did not tell of him.

This was the first time I had been in a country where the great churches belonged to the Roman Catholics, of whom I am one, though not so regular as I ought to be, having lodgers who keep me always on the move, as I tell the priest. (The priest does not know what lodgers are.) My master and mistress were good Church of England people, but they let me do my duties when I could find the time. So, early in the morning, I went to the cathedral of Amiens, and heard a little of the mass. There was something going on in about six different directions, and there might have been in twenty, the building was so large. I could not tell what all the services were, but I could see that a number of little boys were being prepared for their first communion in a chapel on one side, and even more girls in a chapel on the other. I went out at a different door from that by which I had come in, to avoid two beggars who had thrust tin mugs close to my face, begging for sous (that is, halfpence); but there was a couple just like them in the outer porch; and a lame woman, at some distance, came hobbling towards me with such surprising quickness that I almost had to run to get out of her way, as I had no French money with me.

My master and his party, after seeing the cathedral, went to the railway station sooner than was needed, thinking there might be some delay in getting back the money paid at the octroi office. While they were at

the office I was left on the platform in charge of the bags and baskets meant to be taken into the carriage. At that time the trains from Belgium ran into the station at Amiens, and some carriages went on, and others were left. It happened that two or three carriages were standing that had come in at midnight, and were now to be sent off. Just opposite to where I was sitting, a railway man, such as they would call a porter in England, was putting them in order. I could hear a little noise, like the mew of a cat, come from a carriage; so could this man. He jumped into the carriage and looked all about it, and, under the seat, found a bundle which looked like old clothes, but turned out to be a baby. He screamed, and threw up his hands, but without letting the baby fall, and came running to me, talking very fast. I could only shake my head, as I did not know the meaning of what he said, but I took the baby in my arms. Poor little thing! whoever had left it there had wrapped it warmly up, and stuck something in its mouth to keep it quiet, and pinned a bit of paper to its clothes to say that, when baptised, it was to be called Charles Edward, or, as they write it in French, "Charles Edouard."

The porter soon brought every one else belonging to the station round me and the baby. They made such a noise about it that I should have liked to run away, but I held it till my mistress came to see what was the

matter. Then she took it, and asked the porters what would be done with it. "Was there any place for poor foundlings in Amiens?" It seemed rather against her will to give it up to a leading man, who carried it off to one of the offices. Just then my master came in sight, and we went to tell him what had been found.

"What will be done with the poor little thing?" said my mistress. "My dear, I should so like you to go and see what they are doing with it."

"Filling up a lot of papers about it," said my master; "twenty different papers, you may be sure. I have just done with the hams, and now there is a new thing. I wish Mary had never seen it. We may be kept here about it."

We were not kept so as to lose our train, but I was sent for to confirm the account of the porter who had found the baby. I was examined in the station-master's office, my master putting what I said into French. All was put down in writing, and my master was told that, as a great favour, I should be suffered to go on to Paris, but that he must give them his address there and elsewhere, that they might be able to bring me back at any time in case of the death of the child, or of a number of other things that might happen. They were very civil, and got through it as quickly as they could that we might not miss our train. I signed my name, and gave a kiss to the poor baby. It was sucking chocolate,

which a porter held to its lips. Some days afterwards, my master saw in the newspapers that all the men held a meeting on the platform, at which they agreed to adopt the baby as the child of the station, each man giving a small sum weekly out of his wages for its support. They also settled that it should be called "Charles Edouard de la Gare," which means "Charles Edward of the Railway Station."

Ours was a slow train, and it was quite dark long before we reached Paris. I was alone in a second-class carriage till we got to Creil Junction, where there is a large station. Here there was a great bustle, and all doors were thrown open to find places for a number of new-comers. I was sitting next the door of my carriage. The first man who came in, instead of passing me, would have sat down in my lap had I not given a little cry, on which he said "pardon," and passed on. The next did the very same thing, on which I cried louder, and he, too, said "pardon," and felt if the seat he took was empty. The third did the same, and so did all who came, by which time I saw they were every one blind. Nine seats were filled with blind men and women, and a tenth got in who did sit down on the knee of my opposite neighbour, who did not mind it, and an eleventh was getting in, who would have sat down on mine, but I made a noise (since I could not talk their language), and the guard, looking in, saw all places

filled, and pushed the rest into another carriage, taking the odd man away too. I did not like being left with nine blind people, and was in a great fidget till we reached Paris. When my master found me in the carriage at the Paris Station, he was puzzled to know what brought those blind people there, and asked the guard what was the meaning of it. He said there had been a concert at Beauvais for the benefit of the blind, and that these poor people had been sent from an asylum for the blind in Paris to give their help. Some were singers, others good players on musical instruments—all people of talent.

There was the octroi again, and again had the hams and cheese to be weighed and paid for. We were tired, and thought what we saw of Paris poor and gloomy till we came to the Boulevard des Italiens, a wide and well-lighted street, with gay shops. We left it for a street less fully lighted, and that for a narrower street, less lighted still, and then crossed the great thoroughfare of old Paris, the street of St. Honoré, and stopped before a dark doorway, not wide enough to allow the entrance of a carriage. On alighting, and walking through a dark passage, we found ourselves in a courtyard, with tiers of galleries running all round it. I had seen the same kind of thing in a smaller way at some of the old-fashioned English inns. The chief difference was that here the walls seemed to be all windows. A number of people

rushed to meet us, who, landlady, waiter, chambermaid, and porter, all spoke English. This, instead of making one feel more at home, made me, at least, feel more bewildered. It was a cold night to walk round an open gallery as the way to your bedroom, and to find nothing but cold stones (that is to say, red tiles) beneath your feet, with the hearth-rug put in the middle of the room by way of carpet, and nothing but a folding door, that was half of glass, between you and the outer air, which had made you wince as if lashed with a whip. I could have cried if I had not had to unpack. My own room (a chamber they called it in the bill), though I should have said it was a closet for a housemaid to keep her brushes in, and her dusters, with only one pane of glass let in to give some sort of light from the staircase —well, such as it was, I thought I should never reach it, and was so tired when I did, that I fell asleep in my clothes, half sitting on the bed, half lying, and thinking foreign countries were bad places, and that I would go to no more, unless it were to Ireland, which was my native country, barring that I was born in Liverpool.

I woke with a start from a heavy sleep, and thought at first I was in the old bed in a recess, in which I slept with my mother in her last illness. That had shutters, so that you could quite cut it off from the room, and she always made me close them—to "make us comfortable," was her saying—but it nearly poisoned me

and it was the bad air of my cupboard that brought back my bed in the Isle of Man.

There was a great screaming close by me, and much noise from below. I jumped up, and groping my way out, stumbled over two French girls lying across my doorway, on a mattress, on which they had stretched themselves in their day clothes of woollen petticoats and short jackets, with three or four nightcaps apiece instead of their clean white day caps. There was a light on the little landing where they lay, and I could see others coming down from the very roof, and others rushing up from below, most of them screaming and throwing their arms about. What it all meant I could not tell, but I followed the rest, and was frightened because they were. They made for the nearest gallery. All in the hotel had done the same thing, and some had brought their sheets, and were tying them round the balusters, so as to let themselves down, which made me think that the house must be on fire. There were no flames to be seen, but there was a great rush from below to that side of the first floor gallery on which I had left my mistress. I cried aloud in my distress for some one to take me to her, and a gentleman near me said:

"Sure, my honey, just show me the way, I'll take ye to your mistress. Is she a single lady?"

With that he caught hold of my arm, and led or drew me down. I kept asking if there was a fire. He said

"No; but some kind of a powder-plot." There had been a great noise that had shook the house, and broke his windows, and that was all he could tell me. The doors and windows of the side on which I had left our party were all shattered, and many of them blown into the court. There was not a pane left whole in the room where I found my poor mistress and Miss Goodman. They had got into a corner, and fenced themselves with furniture, not knowing what was to happen next. They, too, had been roused by an awful noise.

My mistress thought it must have been an earthquake; and "Oh, Mary," said she, with a very anxious face, "your master would go to learn what was the matter!"

"And so would Tom!" said Miss Goodman, with a groan.

My new friend begged them to be calm; or, as he put it, "not to give way to the fears so natural to their sex; and," he might add, "so more than excusable, so very interesting to their natural protectors. He came from a country where no man could see a lady in distress without rushing to help her."

"I think, sir, you mean Ireland?" said my mistress.

He bowed, and said, "Ma'am, I thank you for the compliment to my country; for, sure, when I said I could not see a female in distress without running to help her, your unprejudiced mind said all at once to itself, 'Then it's from Ireland this gentleman comes, for

certain sure;' but, ma'am, I do you wrong when I say it was your *mind* that drew that correct conclusion. It was your hear-r-rt, ma'am, your hear-r-rt. The heart, ma'am, is a safer guide than the head. It told you my country, when your ear would have told you I was English; being always, as I am, taken for an Englishman on account of the purity of my accent."

My mistress could not help smiling; for, in spite of what he said, it had been her ear rather than her heart that told her he was Irish. She said, civilly, that she was disposed to like Irish people, for the sake of a servant (meaning me) who had lived with her long, and been a good girl. She added that she wished she knew where her husband was.

"And Tom!" said Miss Goodman, with a kind of howl.

"Is it a Tom the dear lady is in fear for?" said the stranger. "Never trouble about Toms, ma'am. Toms and Jacks always fall on their feet. It's nine lives they have—more's the pity for the friends of some of them. If the good lady knew how many Toms there are at this minute serving this old king here in Algiers, serving in Spain, serving the Holy Father, all of them in scrapes, always tumbling into them, always scrambling out of them, she would not fear for any Toms of hers. But to calm her excited feelings, I will go and make inquiries, and you, ma'am, and you, my honey, need not fear but that I will soon be back to take care of ye all."

After an absence as short as he could make it, Mr. Lalor (for that was his name) did return, and told us that all he could make out was that there had been some men arrested in the hotel; no one could say why. A crowd had followed them, and he supposed my master and Tom had gone among others. He ended with bidding us be calm and cool many times over, and with a good deal of warmth, and use of his hands, like the French people.

Miss Goodman said no more about Tom, for she found that naming him only drew upon her an assurance that it was the fault of his name.

"Toms," said Mr. Lalor, "were a well-marked species of the great human family."

Miss Goodman opened her eyes wide at this, and groaned once in the minute.

My mistress wished aloud that we were all back again in England. There had been nothing but troubles since we left London. Mr. Lalor seemed to feel so much for us that she gave him a little sketch of our journey; but he did not take up our trials with Mrs. Smith as I should have expected from a gentleman of his feeling.

What he said was: "Ma'am, I can well understand that it must try a lady of your taste to see your aunt waste her feelings upon a mere jackass. I wish the old lady (begging her pardon for calling her old) long life,

and a better taste. But the feeling is there, the right feeling, ma'am. You must try to raise it. It's myself shall tell her (if I ever see her, which I never may), 'Ma'am, I honour your feeling, but it's with your hor-r-se you should travel, as I do myself. It's with him I go in the truck; it's by him I sleep; and, madam, it's you I'd advise to do the same!' But it's odds she'd be open to reason if I did harangue her, for your sex is all heart, and mine all head."

My master came in as he said this. We were very glad to see him, but he could tell us no more than we knew already. When asked for Tom, he cried out:

"Bless me! is the boy not here? I know nothing about him. I do think I saw him in the court-yard, but I am hardly sure even of that. I'll go downstairs and inquire."

"And I'll go, too, and question such of them as speak English," said Mr. Lalor. "I know no French, that is no *speaking* French, barring the words for 'hay,' and 'oats,' and 'water' (which I was bound to learn for the sake of my horse); but I must do something to calm these ladies. One has lost a beloved nephew, the other a young friend. Who can tell how it may work on their excitable natures! Sir, they are not like you or me. We, sir, are hard, dry reasoners. Facts, sir, are our guides and logic! They are led by feeling and impulse. Something *must* be done to calm them. Will I

go to the head of the police, or is it the English ambassador would be the better man?"

"I hope there is no need to trouble you or any one else," said my master. "Tom has, no doubt, followed the crowd, as I did myself. When I found myself no wiser, I came back, and he will do the same. He speaks French better than I do, and knows quite as well how to take care of himself. If he is not in the hotel, I shall speak to the porter to let him in, and send him to you, Miss Goodman, as soon as he comes."

Mr. Richards heard nothing of Master Tom, but managed to procure the use of two rooms, with unbroken windows, where we snatched a little sleep.

At the ten o'clock breakfast there was no Tom, and his aunt's fears were roused by what she heard of the disturbance in the night.

Two men had been arrested in the hotel, charged with a plot against the King's life. It was said that a barrel of a frightful machine of their making had burst, causing the noise most people had heard (though I did not), and the damage to the house. This led to their being found out, and it was said others were mixed up with them, and that many arrests were being made in Paris.

Mr. Lalor and my master went to the police, thinking that there was just a chance they might have swept Tom away in their general haul of the doubtful people they thought good to detain.

He was not, however, in their keeping. They undertook to let us know if they should hear of him, but made light of his absence on learning that he had been at school in Paris. They thought he had most likely found his way back to his old friends. "We should see him at dinner. He would be very hungry by that time, and hunger was a powerful magnet."

"I do not think of dining here, Miss Goodman," said my master. "This place is so upset with last night's work, that I must take my wife to a more comfortable hotel as quickly as I can. I should advise you to come with us. This gentleman, who means to stay where he is, very kindly says that he will bring your nephew to you on his return."

My master wished to be done with Tom for the present, but his aunt was not to be made easy.

"He may have been killed in the confusion," said she; "or at least wounded. He may be lying helpless and wounded at this moment, no one knows where! He may have jumped from a gallery in his fright, and been taken to the hospital! He may have run away in a panic, and fallen into the hands of robbers, and be lying at the bottom of the river——"

"Then it's to the Morgue I'll take ye," burst in Mr. Lalor.

"Is that a hospital?" asked Miss Goodman.

"No, my good lady. It's where they put the poor

people who can give no account of themselves (whom they find in the river, you know). Don't look so frightened; you won't find him there, trust me. Toms are never drowned. You may have him——" he was going to say "hanged," but his politeness made him stifle the word.

"I'll take you to the Morgue first to soothe your mind. After that we'll go to all the hospitals; and then, if you like, we'll go to his school."

"Better go there first," said Mr. Richards.

Mr. Lalor seemed to prefer to take the more exciting places first; but gave way very civilly. I think he was not unwilling my master should stay with his wife, and let him have the lead in something with a little stir in it.

"And, madam," added he, turning to my mistress, "you *feel*, don't ye, that I will take care of your friend? *She* is the creature of impulse! *She* is all heart, *I* am all head! By herself, she would be all blaze—a lovely blaze, ending in smoke—I mean with no useful lasting heat. By myself I should be too hard to warm, too free from prejudice and passion—as dry as a bone—as hard as a hammer, and as knock-me-down! The two together would be equal to greater efforts than finding out what has become of a young gentleman of thirteen or thereabouts!"

Miss Goodman was easily bewildered at any time. Now, half admiring Mr. Lalor, half puzzled by him, she just did as she was bid, and made ready to go with him.

My mistress undertook that I should pack her things, and that, when we had found rooms, a note should be sent to let her know where they were.

It was with a sense of relief that we saw the two quit the courtyard.

"He flatters himself greatly," said my mistress, "if he thinks he is all head."

"Let us hope our friend Miss Goodman *is* all heart," replied my master, "for she is badly off in the other respect. But Lalor is a droll fellow. He prides himself on being taken for one of us English, yet, so far as such a polite man can, he makes us out to be very poor creatures beside the Irish. He laid down to me as we went along, that he knew himself to be too matter-of-fact, but he had so made it his aim to shun the faults and follies of the Irish character that he feared he had lost its charms. He was as free from impulse as from brogue! He asked me if I did not think so. Of course I said 'yes,' and with a safe conscience. Then he would take me to see his horse. It is a fine bay—a better hobby than poor Joseph. He has two cousins in the South of France, for the winter, and he is going to ride it down there. When at home, he lives mostly with his eldest brother, who has a country place. He did not like to leave the horse there, lest his nephews and the boys hanging about, should ride it to death. Irish boys could not be trusted with horseflesh; they would ride

it across country till they broke its neck. He always feeds it himself for fear of ostler's tricks, and he fretted at not having time to give it proper exercise to-day, on account of all this bustle."

That afternoon we left our shattered hotel, and found rooms in a hotel looking into the garden of the Tuileries. The Rue de Rivoli, in which we were, and the Boulevard des Italiens, were about the only bits of the Paris of that time which looked like the greater part of the present Paris.

The Rue de Rivoli was new-looking, straight, and formal. Then it only ran from the Place de la Concorde to the Tuileries; but this Emperor has completed it, and it is now the main street, supplanting the old one of St. Honoré, with which it runs in a line. Such changes have been made since this Emperor came in!

I hardly knew Paris again when I went there this year by the cheap train which was to run for five francs, that we Nantes people might go to see the Prince Imperial take his first communion. (They cheated us, however, for that rite took place in the Emperor's own chapel, where the public had no chance of going.) I sought for the hotel where there was such a stir on our first night in Paris; but I could not even make out where it had stood. It had been pulled down to make room for one of the new courts of the Louvre, and on my asking for it, I was taken to a new hotel, bearing the same name,

but in another street. It had had the fate of our old hotel in having been the scene of a plot for murder, as it was there that Orsini was lodging when he went to throw the bombs at the Emperor.

The Louvre was finished and joined to the Tuileries, the Rue de Rivoli stretched half way through the city, and the Boulevard des Italiens went farther still, under two or three names. Of course, last year I found it all complete, and with more of the gay shops in which they sell the pretty toys and trinkets for which Paris has such a name. There were more cafés, which of themselves make a street look lively, and it was far cleaner under foot.

On the other hand, when I was first in Paris hardly any coal was burnt there; now it is in such common use that Paris may, in time, grow as grimy as London. It seems to me that, on my first visit, the city looked brighter. At any rate, I had never seen anything so pretty as that boulevard.

What struck me most were the cafés—a word I must explain, as we have nothing like them in England. A café is a sort of inn where you cannot lodge. Some cafés are clubs for artists, merchants, and even workmen of different trades. At many you can only procure coffee and light drinks, or ices. Others are cookshops besides, and have rooms in which a dinner may be served for a single person or for a party.

All have a large room for those who only sip coffee or ice, with newspapers spread on little round tables, at which they can sit apart. These rooms are, for the most part, painted white, and adorned with gay patterns in colours or gilding, with many looking-glasses let into panels. The tables and counters have tops of white marble, and pots of flowers and creeping plants, or well-made copies of both, make it all very lively and tempting. On the pavement outside, whenever the day is fine, even into the winter season, little tables are set out, where the weary or idle passer-by may pause, drop into a chair, and call for coffee and a paper. In summer a bright-coloured awning is stretched overhead, and the green leaves of the planes and chestnuts shade and refresh you; that is to say, if there has been no change of rulers lately, nothing to disturb the peace. They do say you can tell the date of the last tumult by these trees, for, at such times of trouble, the poor things are always cut down that they may be piled up with stones torn from the pavement to make what are called "barricades," that is, fences behind which rioters may take good aim at the soldiers brought out to quell them, and avoid being marked themselves. I have seen two sets of these trees myself; those planted to replace the trees cut down in 1830, when the old King came in, and those grown since 1848, when he was driven out.

You can fancy nothing more unlike bustling and

dingy London than Paris when I first saw it. There was not the same hurry. Few people walked fast. Everything was ordered to please the eye of people who were at leisure, and of those wholly idle. In London, though no doubt there are people as idle as anywhere else, little is done outwardly to provide for their likings, whereas in Paris they have, in some measure, the command of the streets. For them are cafés, shaded pavements, and shop windows set out with taste; for them a distinct name in the language, which it is very hard to express even in four or five English words, for that one word *flâneur* means an easy loiterer along pavements, pleased to gaze at all that chances.

Underfoot it must be said that it was then a very dirty old Paris; dusty in dry weather, very muddy in wet. The streets were narrow, and overhung with old houses, but they differed from each other more than they do now. To-day they are mostly cut by one pattern, new, stiff, and straight. When I think of the older Paris and the new, some verses out of a child's book come into my head:

> "I cannot aver that the streets are straight,
> For they wind about at a comical rate;
> But, after all, would it pleasant be,
> To be going straight on continually?"

Dinner-time brought us Mr. Lalor and Miss Goodman, but without Tom, whom they had hoped to find with

us. They had seen his old master, who said that, early that morning, his household had been roused by Tom, who gave such an account of dreadful things going on in Paris that, for a short time, all were in confusion and dismay. He had himself been somewhat troubled, for, as a teacher of Frenchmen, he was a lover of order. In his haste to go to the scene of tumult, he had lost sight of his former pupil; but he felt sure that Tom must have left before he did.

On quitting the school himself he had given orders to the under-masters that the boys should be *consignés*, or (as we should say in English) forbidden to leave the schoolroom. He should advise his aunt not to distress herself, as he thought her nephew quite able to take care of himself. "And," added Mr. Lalor, "he said that with a shrug of the shoulders that showed me that he was of my own mind about Toms and Jacks."

Miss Goodman agreed to eat her dinner with a certain amount of composure. As night came on she grew uneasy again, and seemed to have fretted more than slept, to judge by her look next morning. Mr. Lalor rode into the court before breakfast, and, as she had no news of Tom, repeated his offer to go with her to the Morgue. He had taken his horse for an hour's ride out of Paris, and so had nothing more to do till he gave him his second feed for the day.

As soon as breakfast was over, the couple started

while my master went to make further inquiries of the police. They still made light of the matter, thinking Tom was taking a day or two for his own whims; but said that if he did not return shortly we should look for him near his former school.

Mr. Lalor and Miss Goodman did not return till dinner-time. They seemed to have been doing a great deal of sight-seeing under the name of seeking Tom, for, besides the Morgue, they had been to some of the hospitals, and seen a number of the worst cases of accident. Miss Goodman was not only cheered by not having found her nephew in any of these dismal places, but rather glad she had seen them. She talked so much more than usual that Mr. Lalor said, with pride, "You see how I have soothed her, ma'am."

My master and mistress could have done without hearing of the horrors she had seen, but it seemed to do her good to dwell on them. Towards night she became uneasy again, and dwelt on the thought that Tom might only not be in the Morgue, because he was still lying in the river.

Next morning Mr. Lalor brought a letter, addressed to Miss Goodman at our former hotel. It was not signed, but said it was from "a true friend." Whoever this friend might be (and my master put him down at once to be Tom himself), he told her that her nephew was in prison, in solitary confinement, with scanty food,

and no prospect but that of being taken to a worse gaol. There was reason to think that her plan of sending Tom to Tours had drawn upon her the ill-will of the King, as Tours was a centre of the party of the elder branch of the Bourbons, whose place Louis Philippe had taken on the throne. The writer ended by saying that her nephew would be set free on her giving her word of honour not to remove him from his former school, as there he would be under the eye of a master well looked upon by the powers that were. There was this for a postscript: "I know that the word '*Suspect*' is written in large letters in the books of the police opposite to the name of your nephew, and I am told that your name is marked as '*semi-suspect*,' or half-suspected, on account of your being the aunt of one so daring and so likely to give trouble to all who try to rule over him."

Mr. Lalor hardly heard my master read it to the end, before crying, "My dear sir, it's fighting this may lead to! The two countries may go to war over this young gentleman! To hunger him!—to keep him without a soul to speak to! Will we go to the old King straight off, and take this afflicted lady in widow's weeds to show 'she feels like a mother to him?' They say the King loves peace. Or we will call in Holy Church—it's a short way to the Archbishop's——"

"Do read the letter yourself," said my master. "I

do not think I ever told you that the boy had a great dislike to going to Tours, and let us all know it."

"Oh, Mr. Richards!" said Miss Goodman, "I cannot think how you can suppose that the poor boy would try to pass off stories on his aunt who brought him up. Think of my passport that was missing at Amiens, and all the questions the landlord put, and that other man! They marked us down then, no doubt, because I could not find my passport, and you know it was in Mary's bag, after all."

"Yes, ma'am," said I, speaking up; "but I know my hands never put it there, and it's my belief that Master Tom's did. He owned it to me by his smiling, and more than that, he told me, 'I should see if his aunt ever got him to Tours.'"

My master cut us all short by asking Miss Goodman to go with him to the school where her nephew had last been seen, and try to trace him, making that their starting-point. Miss Goodman at once caught up a new fancy, which was, that his former master might be keeping him out of the way to punish her for removing him. This made her eager to go to the school; so away they went, and this time they had Master Tom to show for their pains.

He looked rather sheepish the first time I saw him, but carried it off to me as a good bit of fun, when no one was by to hear him.

"I'll tell you all about it, Mary," said he. "It was all chance, you know; I only went down to find out what was the matter. All at once it came into my head what fun it would be to go and frighten old Simon (that was our master, you know) out of his wits, and perhaps get the fellows a holiday.

"He tried to spoil it all by shutting them up in the schoolroom (put them under 'consign,' as they call it here), but, perhaps, his orders were not so strictly carried out as he thought. Before he had turned his back on the school, I had settled what to do.

"There were two fellows who used to look up to me, and to do as I told them. They agreed to help me to hide in a garret, where I had been used to give them famous supper-parties when we could smuggle anything in from the cookshop. This garret was quite out of the way, and only used for stowing empty boxes. We had never known anyone go there but just before the holidays to bring them down to be packed, so I felt sure I could conceal myself there till I made better terms with that aunt of mine, who will not listen to reason about Tours, which is no place for a fellow of my age who has been used to Paris.

"A mere country town, Mary. Well, I told them what to do, and somehow they managed to get out and buy what I wanted. I had plenty of money, and I was very hungry, so I gave large orders. I was forced to

let them lock me in, lest anyone should wander that way by chance. I told them to take the key out, and hide it in some place known to both, that, if one were hindered, the other might still be able to come to me.

"I then set about arranging my boxes to fill up the time. I thought it was like acting 'Robinson Crusoe,' and I called one box my table, and another my chair, and I 'made me a bed,' as he says, only mine was of carpet bags and old wrappers. He did not have such good things to eat though, Mary, for they brought me a partridge pie, with truffles in it, and one of those sweet little hams you see in the windows (with paper frills round the bone, you know), no bigger than your two hands. I had some bottles of wine, besides, and some candles and novels, and I did not mind the fellows going and leaving me locked in one bit. Indeed, if they had staid, I must have asked them to have some of my pie, and I felt as if I could eat it all.

"Now, don't stop me to lecture. I am not greedy. Not one of them will say so, not even those I cannot get on with. I was hungry, and when that was over I grew sleepy, so I laid down and did not wake till the afternoon.

"When it was dusk, and I thought I might venture, I got through a window and took a little airing on the roof. It was so cold that I soon came in again. Then

I lighted a candle and read till I felt hungry again, and having made a good supper I again went to sleep.

"Next morning I missed soap and water more than I should have guessed beforehand. When my friends stole to see me while my aunt was with the master down below, I told them that if they would bring me a basin of water and some soap I would ask them to supper that night. They shook their heads over it, and one of them said I ought to try to rough it. He was sure madame would find out if they even lent me a bit of soap. I knew she had a keen eye for the 'soaps,' as she called them, so I told them to buy me some, and to let me have a little change of diet, and some paper that I might write to my aunt, for I began to think there would be too much sameness about my life up there. So I made up a letter, and she would have taken it all in if it had not been for that master of yours, and that Irishman, who might have been at home with all my heart.

"Then I tried to vary my airing by climbing to see what was on the other side of the roof, just as Robinson Crusoe went to the other side of his island. If he saw the print of a man's foot, I saw the crowns of two high Norman caps.

"Two great girls from the country, whom Madame used to scold all day long, had just turned their backs, and were going in, so I had an escape. They had been

hanging out the clothes, as they do on the housetops here, on cords pushed out by sticks.*

"I sat me down among the wet and flapping linen, and had a fine view of the fellows' little gardens down below in the large garden, and of what had been mine among the rest, and I thought the fun of this would not last much longer, and that I might find it duller than Tours, and I tried to raise my spirits by mewing like a cat. That brought back the girls, but I heard them coming in time to get away, and hide behind a chimney. One only had courage to seek the cat. The other staid below, crying out that she was sure it was the neighbour's black cat, and that she should fall off the roof for fear if it were to rush by her, for that all black cats were evil spirits in disguise.

"You would have laughed to hear it if you had seen the girl lift a sack of flour with ease, as I did once. Well, she stood screaming how frightened she was, and calling the supposed cat pretty soothing names by turns, till I was tired of that, too.

"My friends came at last, and I drew a champagne-cork to show how glad I was to see them. We had forgotten it would make a noise, and were in a fright for some time after, but no one was roused. The fellows drank my health, and I made them speeches. I did not

* A practice to be seen in Edinburgh as well as Paris.

give them too much wine, lest they should be noisy, and found out.

"Oh what a night I had with 'the rats and the mice kicking up a strife!' They had found out that I kept a good larder.

"Next morning I told my two allies that I must be off, unless they could procure me the company of the house cat, but my career came to an end that very day. It was short, but jolly; don't you think so, Mary?"

"I am glad you think so, Master Tom," said I. "I know it's of no use to tell you how much trouble you have given people; but our stay in Paris is to be cut short, lest you should play us such another trick, so that, in my humble opinion, all you will gain by it is that you will find yourself at Tours so much the sooner."

"Oh! that's your moral, is it, Mary? I am not at Tours yet, though I am only sorry now that I spent such a heap of money on my grub. I had enough to have paid for a ticket to England."

Master Tom would not tell me how he was found, but I learnt from my mistress that M. Simon had been asked to allow the boys to be questioned as to when and how Tom had left his school. Two were pointed out as his chief friends, and it was soon observed that they were afraid or unwilling to give plain answers.

Their master at once put on the air of a judge, and wrung from them that Tom was at that moment hidden

in the house. The two were thereupon sent to him with a message that he had better descend at once, and not compel M. Simon to "use means which might wound his self-love."

M. Simon was flattered—he could not but own it—that his former pupil should give so strong a proof of love for his school; still his love of order led him to lament that so bad an example should be shown the rest of his boys.

Tom came down, putting on as good a face as he could. He was clever enough to try to bring his master to his aid. Had Mr. Richards and Mr. Lalor not been there, Miss Goodman might have had a hard struggle against the boy and the master, but with their help her self-will (of which she had a good deal, in a quiet way) got the better of that of her nephew.

Mr. Lalor's powers of speech were used to convince M. Simon, "by close, hard reasoning," as he called it, that to suffer Tom to remain, after what he had done, would injure the boy and the school. So Tom was brought back like a prisoner, and would have been watched, had he not given his word to cause no more trouble. He comforted himself with dwelling on all the dreadful things that might happen between Paris and Tours.

To listen to him, you would think it no wonder if there were to be an earthquake, and all to stop a naughty boy from going to a school he did not like.

Mr. Lalor, who would sooner have left Paris, had it

not been for his desire to be of use, now began to ask my master's advice as to his journey. He wished to ride part of the way from Paris to Orleans on horseback, in order to see the country, which he had been told was pretty.

Mr. Richards went with him to the railway station to engage a horse-truck, to be sent to meet him when he should be tired of riding. This was no such easy matter to settle as one would think. First of all, it was a long time before Mr. Lalor could be brought to make up his mind as to where he would have the truck to meet him. He did not seem clearly to know how needful it was to fix a time and place, and keep to it, when he had to do with railways. Next, the chief of the station treated it as if it were a solemn affair, not a thing that happened daily. He said that, as the "application was somewhat unusual, a formal letter must be sent to the board." He drew out several forms which my master had to translate for Mr. Lalor, who filled them up. An answer was slow in coming, but it did come at last.

Mr. Lalor packed his bag and came to bid all good-bye. He said he had spent part of the time he had been delayed in adding to his knowledge of French. He came into the country with three words for his horse: "Hay, oats, and water;" now, he had learnt three for himself, "Wine, bread, and eggs:" and with the six he could go through that country or any other.

We were not long in following him. My master and mistress had often been in Paris, and found it so cold this time that they wished to leave, and Miss Goodman could not be easy till her nephew was safe at Tours; so what with the bustle about Master Tom, and the shortness of our stay, I did not see very much of that famous city. Most of what I saw is altered now. The place I found least changed was the garden of the Tuileries. When my mistress was out I used to go and sit there, as it was just across the street; and when I could not leave the hotel, I took my sewing into my mistress's bedroom, that I might see it from the window.

My great amusement was to look at the nurses and babies. Nicer-looking babies I never saw, nor any caps and aprons so white as those worn by the nurses. I used to wonder how they could keep them of so good a colour with so short a supply of water as they had then in Paris. I am told they have plenty of water now. Many of these nurses came from a distance, and wore caps with high crowns or large wings, which seemed very strange to me. I was told that each was proud of the cap of her own village, and thought those of other villages highly absurd; now, they are all laying aside the head-dress that marked whence they came for the commonplace cap of Paris.

There was always a sprinkling of negresses and women of colour from the French colonies, with little

Creole children. As links between them and the Norman or Picard nurses, were those from Bordeaux or other places in the South of France, burnt by the sun to as deep a colour as if they came of some race from over sea, and wearing what is called "a Madras," that is, a gaily-tinted pocket-handkerchief bound round the head, with an end left dangling at one side.

A large number of the children were dressed entirely in white, or in blue and white, even to having blue or white shoes. I thought this was one of the fashions of the day, but I learnt afterwards that these were children whose parents had vowed that, if they got better from some illness, they should wear blue or white, the colours in which painters dress the Virgin Mary. In some cases this vow is made to last till the children reach the age of seven; in others till ten, the age when they are confirmed, and receive their first communion. Poor people make a cord of blue, or blue and white, worn round the waist, do instead of a dress, which it would cost them too much to keep up.

I could not but notice that the little boys had far more playthings, in the shape of guns and soldiers, than you would see among as many boys in England, and that the little pictures they sometimes brought out with them were mostly of soldiers and fighting. All the talk at that time was of the fortifications in course of making to keep the English and the Prussians from ever getting

into Paris again. I saw them, for the first time, the day we left Paris for Orleans. They lay just beyond the station. Had I not been told to look out for them, I should have taken them for dry ditches, rather bigger than common. Now the talk is, that the streets are made straight that they may be made easy to clear with cannon, and so that those inside Paris may be kept under with little trouble.

I suppose one thing or the other will be going on to the end of the chapter, but my husband, and some friends of his whom the priest does not like, say that a day will come when there will be no war at all, but that the world will do what it is bid by some one very wise who is to live at Paris. I let them talk, but it makes me laugh to think that Ireland, let alone England, should be at the word of those who never saw either. I do tell them they should go and see those countries before they settle what is to befall them, for no one in England would believe how little is known of us in France.

I have been asked by well-to-do people who keep good shops whether we had fruit or flowers in England, and some good folks were quite comforted to hear that people in England might be called Christians. The fact is that French for the most part know little about any country but their own, and care less, turning this ignorance into vainglory. However, they do not say much to me now I have the use of my tongue in French; for, as my first

lodger said, though it might be he was making a little fun of me, "Mary, your powers of speech are *so* great."

When we left Paris it was late in the afternoon, and the fortifications were almost the last things we could see plainly. Though it was growing late in the year, the day had been very warm, and I found it very close, as the other people in the railway carriage would keep the windows shut. Some people in France have such a dread of draughts that they will scarcely let you have fresh air unless you sit quite out of doors. My master fell in with a party of this kind. Master Tom and he could not find places in the same carriage with Miss Goodman and my mistress, but were packed by the guard in a carriage full of Frenchmen, as they thought at first. After a few minutes they saw that a sickly-looking young man in a corner-seat was English.

On leaving the station, he opened the window; at which, up sprung a Frenchman, who shut it again. The Englishman, who could speak no French, coloured, but put it down again in a quiet manner. The Frenchman rose again, with a fierce grimace and a jump, and shut the window with a slam. The Englishman opened it again. They were now near fighting. The Englishman squared his fists; the Frenchman raised a cane to strike him. Master Tom caught him by the coat, and

my master got between him and the window, to which he got his back.

"Don't you see," said he, in French, "that this gentleman is in bad health, and suffers from want of air?"

The Frenchman was in too great a passion to be civil, let alone thoughtful for people in ill-health. He raised his cane to strike my master, who caught him at the back by his coat collar, saying he would throw him through the window if he dared to touch him. The other Frenchmen rose from their seats, and all talked, or rather screamed, at once, seeming to think the struggle had something to do with the old fights between the English and the French. "Pigs of Englishmen!" cried one; but Master Tom made use of his slang French in reply, and, as my master said, showed it was quite time he was taken from his old school. Tom and the young man who had brought on the quarrel kept off the rest, and my master held the man with the cane by the back of the neck till they came to the next station. There both sides shouted for the guard, to settle the law of right to the window. The English were sure any man with a sense of justice must lay down the English rule, that the person facing the engine, with his right hand to a window, had command of that window—fair command, not a tyrant's power. The guard, however, counted heads, and said the greater number ought to carry their will and pleasure. It was

of little matter, for the Frenchmen all got out at the next station, but there was noise enough for something worse.

It was quite dark when we reached Orleans, so that I saw nothing of the great plain in which that city lies till next morning, when Miss Goodman took Master Tom and me to the top of one of the western towers of the Cathedral. I thought I had never seen so wide a flat before. It was pretty to look down on the vineyards lying all round the city, and on the wide river Loire, crossed by a fine bridge, over which we went on coming down. For so broad a river, it had so many shoals and little islands of sand as to take off from its handsome look, by making you think of what it must be in dry summers when boats sometimes stick fast in it. The vineyards I thought rather shabby when you came close to them. I had looked to see the vines climbing up poles, or hanging from tree to tree, but I found them mostly tied to sticks, and looking no better than raspberry or currant bushes. Many of these vines had leaves of the same colour as those of the copper-beech in England. We were told that these vines were grown in great numbers round Orleans for the purpose of colouring the wine made from the grapes of the Loire (which are mostly white) for those buyers who prefer red wine.

When we were sight-seeing, my poor mistress was

lying on the sofa with a bad headache. She had had hardly any sleep all night, owing to the whining of a dog in the stable-yard. My master, dreading a second night of the same kind (as he was told the dog fretted because parted from its master, who was staying in the hotel), went to find where it was kept, that he might have it put somewhere out of hearing. The ostler agreed to remove it to another stable-yard, and my master went with him to make sure that the thing was done. Some one in that yard was making a great noise by kicking and thumping a stable-door from inside. On the ostler calling out to ask who was there, a voice shouted in French: "Hay! Oats! Water! Bread! Eggs! Wine!"

"That must be Lalor," cried Mr. Richards.

"Wine! Water! Oats! Eggs!" cried the voice.

"Why, Lalor, how came you here?"

"Let me out first, my good fellow, and ask me questions after. It's a trick they have in this country. I make a point of feeding my horse, and they lock me in out of spite. I'm tired of kicking the door. I'll sue that ostler fellow for wear and tear of patience and the damage done to the toes of my boots."

The ostler was so openly amused that my master thought him guiltless of locking up Mr. Lalor on purpose, and made his peace with our Irish friend, who went at once to change his dress, that he might be fit to

see the ladies. Miss Goodman, who had a way of seeming very much surprised by every little thing that happened, made so much of his having been locked up in a stable, that Mr. Lalor began to assure her that he thought it no hardship to stay for hours beside such a horse as his, if only he did it of freewill. Since he had had the pleasure of seeing her he had spent whole nights in his horse's stable at his own desire. When he had reached the station where a horse-box was to meet him, there was none at all. He had missed it, or it had missed him; the latter was most likely. He could make nothing out of the people; they were blundering fellows. So he made up his mind to ride to Orleans. He took the old post-road, which was paved, and planted with trees on either side. The country was pretty till you came to the flat corn-growing level which they called the "Beauce." He put up at little village inns, and found them very cheap. It is true it might be said he found them cheap, because he slept in stables, but his choice lay between clean straw there and a bed in what we should call the taproom, where people sat up half the night drinking; or else in the kitchen, where he should have nothing but a kind of screen between him and the rest of the inmates. He must say for the French that the beds were cleaner than you would find them at any roadside inn in old Ireland. They were made up very high, and with great care, and

looked white and tempting. He thought, however, he would rather rest in private than in public; besides, they might play tricks with his horse. So he stuck to him, and should now ride him to the journey's end, but would first get some one to teach him how to pick a lock. Miss Goodman asked him if he did not think he had better give a little more time to the study of French, and then she drew back, fearing she had given him offence. He calmly replied that he found his six words answer most purposes. When they fell short, he threw in a little Irish. It would make them stare to see what an effect that had. It was his six words that freed him from the stable. Though, after all, it was another proof that we were not so good as those who came before us, for there was a man in the "Arabian Nights" who could open a door with a single word, and it had taken six to release him from bondage.

"And, by-the-bye, Richards, my good fellow, what brought you that way? Is it your old lady has come to join ye, and is her precious donkey put up somewhere in those parts? Many's the time I laugh to myself when I think of her false taste. I shall be proud to meet her, though, and reason it out with her. Is she here?"

"Heaven forbid!" said my master. "I am happy to say our nearest approach to her is by letter. My wife heard from her this morning, but laid the news by till she felt better."

"I have looked into it since you went out," said my mistress, smiling, "and you shall hear some of it."

"Only *some* of it, pray," said my master, who did but suffer my mistress to read that "since they left Mrs. Smith at Boulogne she had been shown two donkeys with long curling hair, belonging to a family that lived near her present lodging. She begged 'Richards' (as she always called my master) to inquire if donkeys were born so in this country, or was it done by art? In this country, there was so little love of nature, and so much regard paid to mere outside, that she should not wonder if they gave even the hair of their donkeys a twist with the curling tongs. She fancied the people wished to sell this couple to her. She should let them know that she preferred solid worth and modest merit to foreign airs and graces. They asked, besides, what she called a high price."

"She is thinking of buying them," said my master; "but she loves cheap goods. I never heard of Josephs with curled hair. What do they ask for them?"

"She does not tell me," said my mistress, "but here is a postscript to say that she only gave ten shillings for each leg when she bought Joseph, who was a native of the Forest of Dean."

"Such," my aunt says, "is the coarse way of making a bargain common in that district. When staying at Cheltenham, I bought him from a charcoal burner to

save him from ill usage, which has made him old before his time, but not harmed his sweet and gentle temper. I will let these French know that I am not one to be carried away by mere outside. Tell Richards to find out for me, at once, if the curl is the work of hands."

Mr. Lalor began to see that his powers of reasoning would be quite thrown away on such an old lady as this. "It is a case where the heart is concerned," said he, "to comfort my mistress. That is what you must tell yourself. It was a pity her feelings had not a better bent given them when she was young. A jackass!" Thereupon he laughed till he cried.

My master, on asking, could not get any more exact account of the asses with long curling hair than that they most likely came from Spain. Mrs. Smith did buy them after much beating down of the price that was asked at first. They were put into Joseph's field, but they led him such a life that they were soon obliged to be taken away, and Mrs. Smith sold them in great disgust. She wrote many letters about those "wolves in sheep's clothing, who would not suffer Joseph to crop a blade of grass," and said they were like "the wretches who seized her tea."

Mrs. Smith and Joseph were both growing infirm. He died, and she bribed her landlady to let him be buried in a sort of back garden. She said she did not like to

leave him in a foreign country; but, besides that, she had taken to card-playing (of which there is a great deal at Boulogne), and amused her old age by winning little stakes of a few pence. After the death of the donkey she did not try to fill his place, but kept so many cats and canary birds that she had to take the whole house, and pay well for it, as no lodgers would stay if she stayed.

Miss Goodman seemed sorry to hear that Mr. Lalor meant to leave Orleans early next morning. She had enjoyed, in her own way, the bustle of those days when they went together to seek her missing nephew; though if any one had told her that she liked it, she would have cried and thought the saying hard.

She could not help hinting to Mr. Lalor that it would be a great comfort could he have gone on with us all to Tours, and stood by her till her nephew was safely entered at the Lyceum. He shook his head, "and begged her not to let her lively fancy picture Toms worse than they were. The name told one their limits. They seldom got beyond scrapes, and mostly turned out very nice fellows. Here was his excellent friend Richards ready to help her at every turn."

Before leaving, he begged my master to take great care of Miss Goodman. "She is," said he, "a charming woman, but it is in her heart her strength lies, you see, Richards, not exactly in her head! She is not going on

with you to Nantes? Oh! well, then I'll take you at your kind offer, and come and see you on my way back in spring, and bring my horse."

We watched Mr. Lalor ride away towards Bourges, early in the morning of the same day on which we started for Tours by diligence. I had never before seen a diligence, and I thought it a poor lumbering thing after the smart, brisk stage-coaches in which we had been used to travel across country in England. Now, they make the diligences smaller and more compact, but in those days it was much as if they had set to work to make a diligence by cutting down a battered old coach and two shabby postchaises (all of them yellow), and stuck them together (the coach in the middle), without mending the leather or the springs. There were no back seats, for a great leathern hood was drawn from back to front, making it look at top like a carrier's van; this covered the huge and heavy French boxes which often threaten to overweight the diligence; and the guard sat in the first place as you mounted to what they call the "banquette," behind the driver.

Our guard had a very handsome white dog of the kind called the Loulou. Of all the dogs I ever saw, these are the most like foxes. They are often of their colour; they have their countenance and their short bark, and I will answer for their cunning. Their tails differ from those of foxes; they are large and bushy, and

curl over their backs, like those of squirrels. Our guard's dog was of a creamy white, without a speck of colour from ear to tail. It was so handsome that one could not help liking to look at it; but those of the true fox colour strike one as more knowing. I may remark that, since then, I have never known the guard of a diligence to be without a white Loulou dog. It seems to go with the place.

Master Tom was so much taken with the looks of this dog, that he wished to ride outside. He gave so many reasons for sitting on the top rather than with us, that his aunt took fright, and thought he had some new plan for making his escape; and my master declared, "that, as the whole of the places in the middle had been taken in order that our party of five might sit at ease in what they called room for six, he must stay with us." For my part, I do believe that Master Tom did only want to play with the dog, and be a little more free, but he was ashamed to give his right reasons, and he had brought it all on himself. So, when he settled into a corner, and shut his eyes and looked sulky, I could not pity him.

The diligence seemed to take a long time to pack with people and boxes, but, at last, with a great cracking of the whip and jingling of the little bells hung on the harness, the four horses started. They

were noble horses, and seemed strong enough to take us anywhere. I never saw horses like them, for size and strength, in England, except those which draw the brewers' drays in London, and they are still more powerful; but then those English horses do their work in a heavy, serious manner, while our four greys rushed along the road as if they took pride and pleasure in showing us how well they would do their stage.

In France they all seem to think that noise helps work. Our horses made much clatter and noise, especially on coming near any village. Indeed, I do think that every living creature makes more noise in this country. I am sure the French cocks crow louder than the English; and if you could but hear the frogs! I believe I talk louder and faster than I used to do in England, but that may partly come of keeping a lodging-house; for, though I have had good gentlemen in my time, no one can tell what a worry there is with lodgers. Sometimes it is hard work to please one set of them, let alone two. Those on one floor have no end of grievances against those on another. The poor landlady has to hear both sides, make things smooth to both, and suffer no one to leave in disgust.

This diligence was taking me into all these troubles without my foreseeing anything at my journey's end but the town of Nantes. As we had a place to spare, we did not find our journey worse than any other by

coach. The road went by the side of the same great river Loire, through a pretty country, all cornfields and meadows on the low bank of the river, and vineyards on the high and rocky bank. The river had always a high bank and a low one, but sometimes they changed sides. From time to time we stopped to get fresh horses at some little, clean, old-fashioned town, with an old castle on the highest point of rock. If the rock was on our side, the castle was on our side; if the rock was on the other, there was the castle and the old town scrambling down the hill below it, and linked by a bridge to a little new town on the low bank. We all thought it a pleasant country, even so late in the year, and were sorry when we could no longer look at it.

As it grew dark, Miss Goodman, as was often her way, began to fidget. On hearing the dog on the roof bark snappishly, two or three times running, she asked Mr. Richards "if it were true that wolves were still to be found in this country, and that they sometimes attacked travellers? She had been told so, but could hardly believe it, for she had read in history that one of our kings had put an end to wolves by setting a price on their heads."

"Yes, but that was in England," said my master. "France might do the same if she had the sea on all sides; but when it is a hard winter, and they can find no food, how are you to stop the wolves from coming

down from the Spanish mountains on one side, or the Swiss on the other?"

"How indeed!" said Miss Goodman, in a tone of terror.

"No fear of wolves now," Mr. Richards went on. "They do not come so far north on this side."

"There are woods full of them near Poitiers," said Master Tom, of a sudden.

"If it be so," said Mr. Richards, shortly, "there are many miles between us and Poitiers, even when we reach Tours."

As Miss Goodman still teased him with questions about the truth of some shocking stories some one had told her about wolves, my master prepared to go to sleep, but, before quite settling down, he drew up the window-sash, and found it was all frame and no glass. It had been broken by some strong blow, for nothing but splinters were left sticking in the woodwork. Just then the dog on the roof snapped again and again. Miss Goodman almost screamed.

"What is to be done? How easy it would be for a wolf to spring through this broken window!"

"I dare say," replied my master.

"My dear Mr. Richards, do not be put out. I only want to guard against danger. Do you think if I stuffed my shawl in it would be of any use?"

"I dare say it would stop my getting the toothache."

Miss Goodman's fears did seem foolish, and the more so because we all knew that they were roused by her nephew for the sake of mischief; but I often thought of her during a following winter, when the snow lay long on the ground, and the wolves came from forests not very far from us, so pressed by hunger that they prowled by night round a station of a newly-opened railway. One of my husband's friends told us that he and others, on night work, got into empty carriages, and kept in them all night, with shut doors and windows, for very fear of their lives.

By-and-by we found that the barking of the dog was at a passenger, beyond the number allowed by law, who lay at length among the boxes. Every time he stirred Loulou, who held the roof to be his own, snapped at him.

When we changed the handsome greys with which we left Orleans we had strong horses still, but not so good-looking, but at the last stage before Tours they gave us four fine and well-matched horses, that we might enter that city with the same stir and show with which we had left Orleans.

For some time before we reached Tours we found the country very flat, and the river growing wider and wider. We drove down the higher bank and across a bridge about a quarter of a mile long, which, my master said, was among the longest in Europe, and along a wide

street, stretching from the bridge, straight through the town. The diligence stopped at an inn nearly half way through this street, and all the passengers got out. Miss Goodman's cousin was waiting to meet her, and had a porter ready to remove her luggage to his house, and another to take ours to a hotel in the newer part of the town, where rooms had been engaged for my master.

Just outside of Tours we had gone through our last bit of trouble with Miss Goodman's hams and cheese. It was a comfort to think that was the last octroi station at which we should be so cumbered, and such a pleasure to see the hamper parted from our luggage, that my mistress smiled at me and I at her.

We were all wishing each other "Good-night!" when the guard, who had caught sight of Miss Goodman's shawl stopping the gap in the window, bade us halt, and in a stern manner told us that, before being permitted to leave the office of the diligence, we must pay for the glass of that window we had broken.

Mr. Richards assured him that it was broken when we got in.

"That," said the guard, "could not be. Did we not know that he had the charge, the sole charge, of the passengers, of the luggage, of the whole machine, and that under his care, the care of Charles Briand, nothing had ever been known to be damaged or broken without

his finding out by whom it was done, and causing that person to make amends in money?"

Mr. James (Miss Goodman's cousin) had lived long enough among the French to know their ways, so he spoke with much respect to the guard, who kept telling us that he was an old soldier, who had served under the Great Emperor. When he found all of us maintain that we had nothing to do with breaking the window, he put it to us that, "as there was a boy among us, was it not likely, nay, more than likely, that that boy had done it?"

"Very likely," said my master; "but, in this case, no one touched the sash but myself, and I did not break it, and will not pay."

"Monsieur will leave me to pay, who am poor," said the guard; "ten francs will barely cover the cost of new glass."

"I will not pay for what I did not break."

"Then, sir, you will be *traduced* before a judge of the peace."

"No doubt I shall," said my master, "but that does not prove that I or any of my party broke the pane."

A gendarme, who had been listening to the debate, came forward and civilly asked us all to go into the office of the diligence, and favour him with our names, and the names of the houses at which we were to stay. All this he took down in writing, and then we were suffered to go our ways, and, I may add, that we never heard another word about that broken pane.

I said before that the outside of French houses is all windows. I might have added that, very often, the inside is all doors. Many houses and hotels are wood-work from floor to ceiling, with doors you know not where, hid by mouldings, or seeming to be panels in the wainscot. In hotels, it is very common to have three doors to each room, for the sake of being able to throw the rooms into a set, besides the doors of cupboards, and that of a dark closet in which lurks in the dark all they give you for washing. In old houses, with thick walls, this is not of so much moment, but in new you must be a sound sleeper if you can rest.

We were all a little heated by the fuss about the broken pane, and we found the walls of our hotel made as if to let in noise. My mistress could not sleep because of a party playing at cards on one side, and some one with a bad cough on the other. I only had the noise on one side, and did not mind it so much as a lady would, but still I should have been crosser than I was if I had not been curious. A child in the next room, speaking English, was naughty and would not settle to sleep, though coaxed and crooned over by her nurse in what I knew to be Irish by the sound of it, though I was too English to know what it meant. The cross little girl seemed to wake a younger child, who was at first fretful and sleepy, then started up, wide awake, and wanting to play. The nurse, by turns,

begged and prayed the girl to let her little brother sleep, and threatened to give her over to a French nurse, who would put her in a dark prison. It ended by the nurse taking the child in her arms, and walking up and down the room till she dropped to sleep, singing all the while scraps of the church hymns, and of songs about Irishmen who had been hanged for murder.

Next morning, when the nurse passed my door, with a great copper jug in her hand to fetch warm water to wash the children, I let her know I was Irish too, and asked how she found herself in this strange country. She put me in a fright, for she was first struck dumb, then took to laughing and crying. The housemaid of the hotel, who went by at the moment, helped me to make her sit down, and then said, in English that I could make out, that she must be bled or she would die.

"Is there anything of me to bleed?" cried the poor thing, jumping up. "I don't like your French ways at all. You bleed your Christians, and you don't bleed your veal!" (or, as she said, "vale.")

The housemaid looked at me, and touched her head, then said, "I must tell Madame, and the doctor who visits the lame English lady shall be told to draw her blood."

"It's myself will draw his first!" cried the Irish nurse, "and here's the good jintleman that will stand my friend!"

She sprang up, and worked her way with a quick-

ness that amazed me (for now I saw, for the first time, that her back was so much out of shape that you would have thought it strange she could move at all) towards a gentleman who looked like a priest of the English Church, and called on him not to let her be bled. She was "upset by joy at meeting some one from Ireland, that was all."

"But Bridget, my good woman," said the clergyman, "the French people may think you might show your joy in a more quiet manner."

"Begging your honour's pardon, I show my joy much as they do themselves, only it's more for spite they cry than for joy at all. I scorn her and her ways," pointing to the housemaid's back as she went quickly to answer a bell. "She goes about telling folks before my face that I have a crack in my head. I've asked her to prove her words in the presence of the rest of them. They may look all over my head, back-hair and all, and see if they can find a crack. The *shakes* in the head I have, I'll own, ever since my husband turned his back on me and his fatherless children; but it was to better us all he did so, and not to leave me because of my trouble in my back, as that woman with the hard heart goes about saying. I told her she had better not be too bold. Who can say what may happen to her? We are all born, but we are not buried; but your honour knows well the cause of her spite."

"Yes, you have often told me," said the clergyman, very mildly, but beginning to go downstairs.

"And so I have, and the comfort you have been to me, may the Lord make up!"

As he was quite gone, she turned to me and said, "It was all about scrubbing a floor. When first we came here, I could not settle to the floor. It was of red tiles, which had never been washed since they were laid down. When the children broke loose while I was washing them, they came back with red feet, and their clothes were so stained that the women down at the river-side, who hit them with great wooden battledores against the flat stones, wore them out before they were clean. So, one day, says I, 'with the blessing of God, I'll buy a pound of soap and scrub this floor.' I did not need to buy it, for my mistress was living then, and I took it, and just as I had done my room, in comes this Bette, as they call her, and she has never got the better of it. It terrified her so to see I had scrubbed that floor!"

"She is head housemaid?" said I.

"Head housemaid, bless you! Head and chief she is, no doubt. The under housemaid wears whiskers on his lips, and is her husband, and brightens the wood-floors by bees-waxing them and then skating up and down with brushes made fast to the soles of his shoes! *She* would not touch a floor. She helps her husband to make the beds, and drives the dust about with a feather brush,

and then her work is done, and she stands on the landings with her hands in her apron-pockets, and chatters to anyone coming her way, and makes a mock of me!"

The housemaid, who just then came to tell me that I was wanted by my mistress, caught enough of this to make her shrug her shoulders, and give me a knowing look. I told the nurse that I must go now, but should try to see her again. I found from what the housemaid said as she went with me to the door of my mistress, that the Irish nurse had been in the hotel for months, and that it was an old quarrel between them.

My mistress drank her coffee in bed, then I dressed her, and she sent for the landlady to ask if she could not let her have a quiet room. Madame was pretty and pleasant, but quick of word.

"All our rooms are quiet," said she, with an air; but, seeing by the look of my mistress that she stood in need of rest, she added, that she had given her the rooms we were in because they were the gayest she had, and much sought after on that account.

"Look round, Madame," said she. "Madame has five windows in her chamber, three looking upon the Boulevard, two upon the Royal Street. Madame cannot weary herself here in this corner room, but if Madame be ill, it is another thing. There are other rooms quite apart from the street, but I fear that Madame may find

them *triste.* (Now French people think they have said their worst when they tell you a thing is *triste*, or will make you *triste.* The word means to be very dull, and rather gloomy besides.) My mistress who had found her little bit of sleep towards dawn broken at its happiest moment by the roll of waggons bringing fuel and food from the country into Tours, and all turning round her corner room into the great street, caught at the notion of being a little dull, and begged to see the rooms. We followed the landlady across the courtyard of the hotel to a pavilion, by which the French mean a building looking as if it made part of the larger building by which it stands, but not joined to it by a staircase. The ground-floor was, as is often the case, used for putting carriages under cover, and for all sorts of odd jobs, such as cleaning boots and shoes. It was rather dull, I must say, after the other rooms, where something was passing at every minute; but my mistress closed with these rooms, because they were all to ourselves, and nicely furnished.

"I shall not call them dull at all," said she, looking from the window of her sitting-room across the court. "Look, Mary, there is a pretty group!"

The pretty sight was a great magnolia tree in a corner, reaching so high that we were told they picked the flowers out of the staircase windows on the second floor, when it was in blossom. It was only in leaf now,

but, with the other evergreens in green tubs, made the place look as if the fine weather were not all gone. Under the magnolia tree was a bench on which sat a French nurse sewing with all her might, while a little boy and girl, our landlady's children, as she told us, were playing about her, sometimes feeding a parrot, perched on a high stand, from which he would suffer himself to be taken and marched about the court, sometimes on the head of the little girl, sometimes on the boy's finger. The sun was shining, and my mistress said it looked "southern," and settled to take the rooms. I was running backwards and forwards, unpacking boxes, and putting things first in one room, then in another, when my master came back from the *table d'hôte* * breakfast, bringing with him the good clergyman whom he had met below, and his little daughter, about seven years old.

As he was sitting down, after having spoken to my mistress, he caught sight of the children playing in the court, and bade his little girl go and play with them, and be sure she spoke French, and tried to speak as the others did.

"Pardon me, Madame," said he, turning to my mis-

* Most French inns have a public table at fixed hours, at which any one may breakfast or dine who will. Travellers may there meet some of the townsfolk, and find a cheaper approach to a good dinner than in any other way.

tress, "I try never to lose a chance of putting her in the way of gaining a good French accent."

Just then the Irish nurse worked her way to the bench, shuffling from side to side in a way that made you sad to see it.

"Poor thing! poor thing!" said the clergyman. "I wish she had not come. She is enough to spoil all."

She was followed by two children, the same I had heard during the night. At the same moment we saw Master Tom cross the court, on his way to our rooms. He was sent by his aunt to ask how we were, and whether or not we had had any more trouble about that broken pane.

On my mistress asking, in her turn, after Miss Goodman, her nephew answered as to her mind, not her body.

"I think she feels it now," said he, shaking his head. "She begins to feel to what kind of place she has brought a fellow used to Paris, you know. She said of her own self that the place looked quiet, and that she was surprised to see that fine street lighted with oil. You saw those queer old lamps that they draw up and down by cords? Quite out of date, you know. I should say the place was three hundred years behindhand."

"But, my young friend," said the clergyman, "that is the very reason why I am here for one, and your worthy aunt, most likely, for another. You, perhaps, are not aware that Frenchmen of learning say that their

language is best spoken in a district lying between the cities of Tours and Blois (a distance of thirty-five miles). English boys used to go to Blois to learn to speak French well. Now, more come to Tours than to Blois. The French of Paris is like the English of London—mixed, my dear boy, mixed."

It was droll to see Master Tom's look of amazement on hearing that anything was not of the best in Paris. Mr. Lawson, the clergyman, thought him a well-mannered lad on seeing him dumb with surprise, and took his not knowing what to say for respectful attention. Master Tom told me afterwards that Mr. Lawson preached a long sermon on how Tours had been for many, many years a favourite seat of the French kings, who loved the fruitful country, and perched castles on the rocks, and built fine houses for their pleasure in the open plain, whence they might go hunting in time of peace.

"I do not mean to say that they have left many tales of their good deeds," said he, shaking his head. "Almost all these buildings put one in mind of some bad king, or some great crime, but one trace the Court has left in Touraine (as they call the country round Tours), which is, that a prettier and clearer way of pronouncing French has come down to these days, so that more than one good French writer says that a working man of Tours or Blois speaks with a purer tone than a well-taught man of Paris. You may have heard the same thing

said of the Italian language as spoken at Sienna, and the German at Brunswick and Hanover. I knew nothing of this when I was stopped on my way to Pau by the trouble which befell my poor wife. Poor thing! she missed her footing on those slippery bees-waxed stairs of the hotel, and hurt her leg, so that she has been laid up here for weeks, and may be for many more; but now mark how good is sure to come out of what we call our troubles. If she had not had that fall, we should not have known what kind people there are in Tours. Such good people, speaking such pure French! Our landlady and her mother have nursed my wife as if she were of their own blood, and we have had such a kind and careful French doctor. I am sorry to say that the English doctor has taken offence at me for not sending for him; but when he cools he will own that I have a right to try to improve my own accent and that of my family. At present he is so much out of humour that he has himself called out of church when I am to preach for my friend the chaplain, and I am sorry to say he tells people there is something wrong in my views because I go to hear a monk who is preaching a course of sermons. Chiefly for the accent, of course. My French doctor tells me of anything going on in the way of public speaking. There is a curious trial going on to-day, if you would like to hear any of their law-men."

It almost made me smile to hear a gentleman who had

not a hair that was not white, talk about learning to pronounce his French, as if he were a little boy, and I could not help wondering if his poor, lame wife thought getting into the hands of a doctor with a pure accent made up to her for having to lie on a sofa for so many weeks. However, he looked so good, and spoke so simply, it seemed a shame to smile.

When I had dressed my mistress for taking a walk with Mr. Lawson and her husband, we all went downstairs and crossed the Court; I to join the Irish nurse, and the others to pick up Mr. Lawson's little girl.

As we drew near them, we heard the parrot screaming, "Mind your accent, Bessy Lawson! Mind your accent!" and the Irishwoman screaming against it, "Oh the bad baste of a bird, and the bad, bad child to tache him to mock a kind jintleman!" "Mind your accent! mind your accent, Bessy Lawson!"

"I hope Bessy Lawson will mind her accent, and you too, Nora," said the clergyman, shaking his gloves at the little girl who had given so much trouble in the night, and who was now capering about in great glee, while the parrot went on screaming.

"Never mind, Bridget. We shall make a good girl of Nora some day. Do cease wringing your hands, there's a good woman."

"I must wring something, your honour. It's that bird's neck I'd be wringing if I did not know what a

French noise would be made over it, so I just wring my hands to keep down the thoughts."

Nora, with no manner of concern, skipped up to us, with the parrot perched on her head, and asked Mr. Lawson to go upstairs, reach out of the window, and gather for her a blossom of the magnolia, which that shrub, as is often the way with it, had thrown out long after all the rest of its bloom was over. He was taken up with the little French girl, who was crying because she had the toothache.

Just as he began to attend to Nora, Madame Charles, the landlady, showed herself at the window above the magnolia, drew the branch with the blossom towards her by means of a hooked stick, and cut off the flower.

Mr. Lawson said, "I am glad it's gone. You've craved for it so often, Nora, that you set me dreaming last night about seeing you fall from that window, and break your neck in trying to reach it. I woke in a fright lest Harry, who was leaning out to look after you, should fall too."

"Harry no fall," said Nora's little brother. "Harry rock in the tree-top. That so jolly!"

"What do you know about jolly?" said my mistress, patting the little boy, to whom she seemed to have taken a fancy.

"Harry do know," said he, in a sturdy way.

"You can't tell what it means."

"Jolly means when children come out of school." He said this with such spirit that all laughed.

"That tells against my wife and myself," said Mr. Lawson. "She gives him a little A B C, and I take Nora with Bessy. They have lost their poor mother, who died here in spring, while their father was in Spain, and we were afraid they might forget all they had been taught."

The Irish nurse began crying as he spoke, then caught at Nora to scold her for sitting on the sand in the good, new, black frock that she wore for her blessed mother. She shook the child sharply, and I thought was going to slap her, but it ended in a hugging. She then cried shame upon herself for letting a tear fall on a child, let alone the child she had suckled herself, besides wetting her nice new frock, and put up her hand to dry her eyes, "lest worse luck should come, if worse could happen." This gave Nora a chance of wriggling like an eel from her other hand and off her lap. The nurse pursued her with scolding: indeed, her hard words and soft came so close together that it put me in mind of my own poor mother, who was Irish too. Nora was too busy to listen to her. She was attacking little Aimée Charles, who had seized the parrot while she was on her nurse's knee. Aimée, in both French and English, for the children seemed to give and take the two languages, stood up for her right to "the parrot of mamma," and ran roaring to meet her mother, who was

coming towards us, with the flower we had seen her gather. With the tears of toothache mixing with tears of rage, Aimée clamoured for the flower. I think she asked for it chiefly because she had just heard Nora wish to have it.

Madame Charles shook her head, and gave it with a civil speech to my mistress.

"Then, mamma, you should give me sweetmeats if you take my flower for the English lady, and I have the toothache, oh! so badly."

The mother shrugged her shoulders in the French way, and drew from her pocket a box full of pretty sugar-plums; she let Aimée help herself to them, much to the distress of my mistress, who could not help saying the child would make her toothache worse.

"What would you have?" said the landlady; "she is a child; she cries for what will do her harm. Children are made like that!"

That was the first time I took much notice of those three French words, "Que voulez vous?" which I have tried to explain by "What would you have?" I am now quite used to them. Helped by a slight raising of the shoulders and eyebrows, they are at hand for any one who must give an answer, and has not a good one ready. From a broken pitcher to a broken promise, those words will serve all cases. It was true the pot was cracked, it was true the word failed, but "What would you

have?" If you do not hold your peace you are made to feel yourself a person without reason who looks for something out of the nature of things.

My mistress said no more, but thought French mothers must spoil their children sadly, and that it was a good thing they seldom had more than two to spoil. She turned to go with Mr. Lawson, and asked the little boy to kiss her.

"Harry would rather not," said he, not rudely, but in a frank way, which pleased Mrs. Richards better than Nora's putting up an unwilling cheek for a kiss that she did not return.

Now, I had seen in the entrance of the hotel a card in a frame, on which I read that this we were in was the best hotel between Paris and Madrid. I knew so much as that Madrid was the chief city of Spain, and it struck me that if I was anywhere on the way to it, I must have gone very deep indeed into foreign parts. So I asked Bridget, when our party was gone, to tell me if I were at all near the road to Spain, as I wished to have a look at it.

"I'll show ye the road, bad luck to it!" said she, rising; "it was the way the father of them" (pointing to the children) "went, and little he knew he was leaving the misthress to die here."

Nora, who had made friends with Aimée over the sweetmeats, said she would not go with us, and Bridget

gave up the point, and, taking the boy by the hand, worked her way quickly, but with a great effort, across the courtyard. I told her I was sorry to take her to tire her, but she replied, "Sure, I'd walk with ye to the latther end of the world."

We were soon beside the fountain in front of the barrier of the octroi as you leave Tours by the road to Spain. The ground rose beyond the barrier, but not so high as on the other side of the river. Indeed, I found afterwards that the road to Paris looked more like one's notion of the road to Spain; that is to say, so dusty on a windy day that you felt sure it must be burnt up in summer, besides being on the side of the river where the banks were suited to vines. We walked a little way along the Boulevard, and sat down on a bench under the elm trees.

Now, when I spoke of the Paris boulevards, I did not put in that I heard Mr. Richards say that they got their name from having for the most part been laid out on ground gained by levelling the walls and earthworks, or *bulwarks*, which, in old times, used to defend nearly all towns. Such walls are still to be found complete, and with towers and gates, at several little towns near us in Brittany, but the large cities have pulled them down, finding them too tight a girdle, hindering their breathing, checking their growth. In their stead you often see what is the widest street of the whole town.

At Tours, though there are houses now on one side, then on the other, and, for short spaces, on both, there has not been enough building yet to make the Boulevard a street. Old people call it the *Mail* or Mall, and speak of the wonder it was held to be when first made, and the care taken to keep it up. It was watched, and anyone walking on it till the ground was thoroughly dry after rain was fined ten francs, or about seven and sixpence in English money. The leaves, which fall sooner than in England, were all gone from the four rows of elm trees, but it was very dusty. I said so to Bridget, who had begun to cry again.

"It's chiefly so here," said she, "in this ill town; you should see what it is down by the bridge on a windy day! but, if it's one tear I've shed sitting on this seat, I've cried enough to lay all the dust of the place, as sure as my name's Biddy Noonan, which may be it is not, for that hard-hearted villain has left me in doubt of my name and of my nature."

I had lived so long among the English that I had partly forgotten the Irish ways, and I could not help showing my surprise that she should call her husband a villain to me, when I had just heard her defend him against the French housemaid.

"Bless you," said she, "I said that for my own credit, and the credit of the childer! You'll do the same thing when you marry, and your husband leaves you, as mine

did, with four boys and a girl, to go to Californy by way of Havre, with a lot of Frenchmen who went to dig the gold. The newspapers set them all wild. I put up prayers for nine days to soften the heart of him, and then I took and burnt six new shirts he had bought for the voyage before his very eyes. He bate me well, and he left just the same, but you see I had the comfort of knowing I had done all I could."

Her pretty, pinched face flushed and looked so fierce as she said this, that I could tell what she was like when burning her husband's shirts, and wonder she had come off with her life, cripple though she was.

The little boy who had been brought away from the fun in the courtyard was weary of us by this time, and kept saying, "Harry has nothing to do!" "Oh whisht, my honey!" said Bridget, searching her pockets for some toy, and bringing out sundry bits of string, and a tin railway-engine, very gaily painted. The string was tied to the engine, and the child was amused for a whole minute; then he handed it back, bidding her keep it for him "in you's pocket."

"My little Biddy," said he, coaxing, "do buy Harry a truck to tie to him's engine."

"Where did he pick up the names of those nasty railroad things?" I might well ask, for railways were not so common then as now.

"It's the masther taught him those bad words," said

Bridget. "You see, his father is what they call an engineer. He does not make them himself, but he's a great scholar and lays down the plans. It's a good trade for pay, but a bad one for the wife that was left at home when he went the long journeys."

Bridget told me that when they were steady to one place, her master and mistress lived at Nantes, where there were several English and Irish families, some chance comers for a time, others who had settled there that they might live more cheaply. Now, I was sure I had heard Mr. and Mrs. Richards name the Dennises when they spoke of the friends they looked forward to finding at Nantes, but Bridget could tell me nothing to prove hers to be the same people, though I made up my mind they must be.

Her own father and mother were, she told me, servants of an Irish family, who had come to live at Nantes, to be near a sister married to a Breton country gentleman, as many Irish ladies are. Her brothers all worked in the lead mines of Brittany, except those who had gone to sea. She had done worse than work in a mine. She had let herself be talked over to marry a gentleman's servant who wore a watch chain and "a black heart he had under it."

"If ever I've the chance to come near him again!" said she, in her sudden way.

Losing one of her children at a month old, she had

been hired as wet-nurse to Miss Nora, who was then so sickly, that she thought at first she should never like to suckle such a skinny little thing; but the love came, "till, if you'll believe me," said she, "I'm fonder of her now than of all my own put together. For one thing, they have never given me the trouble she has done; first with her illnesses, and now with the mischief in her."

When it began to be time to wean her, she could have killed any one who advised her mistress to do so. She managed to delay the change by working on the fears of Mrs. Dennis, that the child might suffer. When there was no putting off any longer, her mistress said she gave much more trouble than the child did.

"Indeed, my dear," she owned, "I did have thoughts of stealing her, and going off on the tramp with her in my arms (for it was before I lost one of the links of my back by breaking of it), and I could have earned my living by going from church-steps to church-steps, and saying my prayers for those who gave me a copper.

"You see, I was a little off my head, for taking that child away from me was like cutting out my heart, and I never felt right till I had another baby of my own, and not then either—for I thought my poor little girl an ugly baby after Miss Nora.

"I was with the mistress after Master Harry was

born, for the French nurse fell ill, and they sent for me. I like Harry well enough now, but I grudged him the love he brought with him, for long and long."

The mistress said, "Biddy, I'm half afraid to trust you with that baby-boy of mine, for I am sure you're jealous of him for Nora's sake."

"Indeed, ma'am," said I, "you need never fear I'd hurt him, for he's a dear little fellow, and I could kiss him, clean or dirty; but though I have made up my mind to his being here, since here we have him, I'll own to thinking it would have been better if he had never come."

"While I was nursing, my mother, who was a widow by that time, took care of my children; and it was she let me know that my Noonan was filling up his head with fancies about these gold diggings, and go he might and welcome, for he was good for little but to brush jintlemen's clothes and copy their ways of shaping the hair on their chins. Only who was to fill the five mouths, and mine into the bargain? He was not over fond of work of any kind, and for him to talk of going for the gold! He found he had to do more since I got my lameness, which came of an accident after I weaned Miss Nora, and I'm jealous that was why he left me. He was one of that sort that would rather have any back ache than their own. Well, it comes natural to the Irish to be married and in service. My

mother had been so before me. So she made light of keeping the children, when my mistress, out of pity, said I might stay on, if I could.

"Good Christians help my mother; and the Little Sisters of the Poor who go about with a donkey, begging what rich people throw away to fill the panniers, and take the children scraps every now and then; so they live somehow! No thanks to the father. He has written two or three times, and once he sent some money, but it's three years since. I know he's alive, for a man came home who left him well, in the States, for it seems he did no good at digging. I knew he would not. I keep sending him letters; that good gentleman, Mr. Lawson, wrote for me, and he made friends with a French priest, who wrote to a priest in the States, to look him up, and show him his sins — but it's an Irish priest he wants, with a big whip to bate him, and soften the heart through the shoulders! The troubles I've had, and the misthress too!

"Hard upon a year ago the master took that road"— here she pointed to the way to Spain. "He was bound to be a long time away about a railroad he was planning. So, as the mistress had a tender chest, he brought us all here to pass the time he was in Spain. It was more on the way to him, and is held to be more healthy than Nantes. And she did hold up her head at first, as if she were stronger; but when it came to

spring-time, she fell weak all of a sudden ; but she always thought she was going to improve, and made me think so too. But she took one cold on the top of another, and we could not bring her to eat the snails which keep many a one alive that has weak lungs ; and she sank so fast at the end, that there was but just the time to bring the master back from Spain to take his leave of her. He was so near the wind-up of what he had to do, that he left us boarding in that hotel till he could come and move us back to Nantes himself—and I shall be glad of the day, for it's time I saw my own orphans ; though Mr. Lawson writes for me to mother, and reads me what comes back, and I know them to be well."

The child, who had all through gone on telling us, " Harry has nothing to do!" now began to yawn and say, " Harry wants something to eat. Harry had no dinner to-day!" and then, in a piteous voice," Biddy not mean to give Harry any dinner to-day?"

This put Biddy in mind of his sister, and she got up in a hurry, saying, " that if he was hungry, Nora was sure to be more so ; for she had not made so good a breakfast as he had."

I wished to see a little of the town as I was out, so she told me " that if I went straight forward past the road to Spain, I should come in sight of two high towers which were all that was left standing of St. Martin's, a great abbey, that had the Kings of France for abbots,

and was pulled down after they cut off the head of King Louis, at the time of the 'French Riots,'" as Biddy called the Revolution. She added, "that they did say at Tours, that every man who had put his hand to that bad work died before a year was out. There must have been burials past counting, for they do say that here it takes two men to lay one stone in a wall, the folks are so fond of their ease."

I saw her back to the hotel, then went along the Boulevard, which on that side ran along like a high terrace, raised above a wide, grassy hollow, filled in old times with the city moat. By-and-by, my walk bent to follow the shape of the town. If I had gone far enough, I should have come to the river Loire, but I stopped where a canal ran below, instead of the dry moat, and had a pleasant view of the gardens beyond, with little houses sprinkled among them; and on my own side of the canal I saw the white town roofed with grey slate, and the church towers far above the high roofs.

Just then, my master's party came up to me. Mr. Lawson had been telling them much the same things I had heard from Bridget. My mistress was quite taken up with the surprise that her little pet of a boy should be a child of my master's schoolfellow, Mr. Henry Dennis. She turned back from time to time to ask me some question about the children, or the mother they had lost, until Mr. Lawson parted me from her by leading the

way down a street to show the house of Mr. James, where Miss Goodman was staying.

When my mistress came back to the hotel, she told me they found Mr. James was the doctor who had a quarrel with Mr. Lawson, which she hoped to have been the means of ending. She had told Mr. James how keen Mr. Lawson was in his hunt for a pure French accent, and the doctor had said, " he was glad to hear it. If he had known him to be odd, he should have felt no pique at his calling in a Frenchman. His British feelings had been hurt to think that an English healer of the soul could not trust another Englishman with the healing of his body, and he had thought that perhaps he would be calling in some French quack for his own soul next. If he were odd, that settled all. He did love odd people. There were too few of them in England now-a-days, and hardly any in France. The French said of themselves, that they copied each other, as one sheep follows another. No doubt a good deal was due to their all learning the same lesson at the same hour, in the public schools throughout the kingdom. I assure you," he added, " for the most part, they say the same things in the same way. I can pretty nearly tell beforehand what answer will be given to any remark I may make. You, ma'am, who, being a female, think of dress, have you not seen how the women here have all the same figure? Fat or lean, they all aim at one model; you may be

slender, or, as they call it, ' svelte,' or you may be stout, it does not matter, you must try to have the same outline. They dine alike, ma'am, and I have no doubt have the same dreams. Now, I dream (when a little out of order) of good, rich, English beef. I had the same dream thrice in the same week lately, and I called to mind that Galen, the old Greek, the father of physic, ma'am, says, ' that such dreams show the patient to require good living.' Now, we all do here. I assure you, ma'am, the patients in the hospitals sink for want of beef-tea and brandy. They take in a man with a wound, ma'am, or an accident, and they bleed him off at once, to *calm* him, ma'am. I won't say it has not that effect. The calm is often lasting.

" Ma'am, I am going to give myself a dinner now. My cousin has brought me some good English fare, and I hope you'll come and your husband; and I know a Yankee or two I shall ask, for they are as tired of their diet here as I am; and I shall offer my hand to Mr. Lawson, now you have made clear to me *his* little way of being crazy: and I shall ask his wife too. Poor soul! I dare say they have bled her often."

My mistress wound up with this: " And now, Mary, you must know that I have said you shall make a plum-pudding for this dinner. Don't raise any reasons against it—I know you can do it, and I do pity the poor man. He spoke with such feeling of the beef, and the bitter

beer, and the 'porter beer' (as they call it here), I thought the tears would have come into his eyes.

"It seems his wife, who has become quite French in her dress and manner, cannot live long in England on account of her health. Mr. James need not practise as a doctor, for they have money; but he likes something to do, and something that brings him in the way of the English, besides; so he took it the more to heart that Mr. Lawson should employ a French doctor. Now, Mary, be quick with my shawl, for I must call on Mrs. Lawson before dinner."

When my mistress came back she said that Mr. James, who liked oddity, would find Mrs. Lawson to his mind as well as her husband, but she did not know what Mrs. James, who talked of nothing but dress, would make of her. Mrs. Lawson had had her head shaved when ill, and my mistress found her sitting without any cap or head-dress—"with just a bare, close-shaven head, and a pair of ears sticking out like handles by which you might lift her."

"And Mrs. James, Mary, is fair and faded, and sits on a sofa with her feet on a small stool, with a little bit of woolwork in her hand, and gently scolds Miss Goodman for having been so very unthinking as to leave Paris without new clothes. She wonders we did not all stay a week or two longer to pick up the new fashions for the winter that is coming on. Well, some people

are like that. I had an aunt (she was Mrs. Smith's sister) who wished to put off my wedding when the day was fixed, because it was a month before the spring show of fashions in the little town where we lived, and all my clothes would be out of date, she was sure. If I had given in to her, I am afraid that your master might have been tempted to put it off altogether. She was vexed, though, that I did not, and I do not think I ever was in high favour with her again. Well, Mrs. James dresses like a Frenchwoman, and has the figure her husband describes, and she is bent on making Miss Goodman have a figure, too, and she raises her eyes sadly when she speaks of how badly gowns are made in England, and that is all she seems able to do. There is that dear little boy out again. I am sure it must be too cold for him. I must stir up your master to write to Mr. Dennis to offer to do anything we can for those poor children. As they are to go back to Nantes, we might take them when we go."

"My dear," said Mr. Richards, "do remember the donkey, and Tom, and the octroi. Two children and that nurse would be worse than all the rest, and Mr. Lalor's horse into the bargain."

"Nora would not be so bad without the nurse," said my mistress, musing. "I suspect that woman favours her at the expense of her little brother. Perhaps, when Mr. Dennis comes home——"

"You alarm me, Anne," said my master. "You never were thought like your Aunt Smith, were you?"

"To compare that fine little boy with an old blind donkey!" said my mistress, who had often had a wish to adopt a child.

"Mrs. Smith would not allow me to compare any child with Joseph," replied my master, who, however, did write to Mr. Dennis that night, like a good husband as he was and is. He sometimes sends my Ernest a whole boxfull of his cast coats and trousers, which have more wear in them when old than the flimsy French cloth when new, and I tell my man that to wear one of my master's coats ought of itself to teach any man how to treat a wife kindly; not that I make any complaint of my husband, Frenchman though he be.

The next day being Sunday, Mr. Lawson came to our rooms with his little girl and the Dennis children, and my master and mistress went with them to the English church, followed by Biddy and me. We left them at the door when we had given up the children to a French female verger of middle age in a lace cap with ribands, who said she would look after them, as Mr. Lawson was to read prayers that morning.

At Tours the English church and the French Protestants share one building, keeping their separate clergy, and having their services at different times.

As Biddy and I went to our mass I made out that, since their mother's death, Mr Lawson had taken Nora and Harry to church, finding that Biddy, when friends with her priest, was rather apt to take them to mass. On the other hand, when she did not think her priest quite so ready as he should have been to do what she wished, she was apt to let him know (at least, so she said) that she had a kind friend in one of the English clergy, who would do great things for her children if she would go to *his* prayers, and she did not see what she could do better if those did not help her who ought. You see, Biddy (who the French priest said had "no logic," meaning that he could not make her reason) had got to know that, within a mile or two of Tours, there was a wonderful school for turning bad boys into good, and teaching them to read, write, and labour. It was called a Reformatory, and was the first of the kind ever known, being started by two good gentlemen, who thought it a pity that little boys who had stolen something for the first time should be sent to prison to be hardened by those who had been stealing all their lives.

Now Bridget had got hold of this fine, long word, Reformatory, and kept dwelling on what a thing it would be if she could get one or two of her boys placed there; and when the priest asked if they had stolen, or trespassed, or hurt any one's goods, though she would fire up, and praise them for good children, yet it did

not stop her wanting to put them in among those bad boys, and she held out that "the best thing was to reform them before they stood in any need of it." I will answer for it, however, that Mr. Lawson never aimed at tempting her to go to his prayers, and liked her less after she told him as much as she told me now. If she *did* threaten her priest to turn (of which I do not feel sure), I am certain that she never meant to do so. Though her heart was warm, Biddy was a bit of a schemer, and, as for truth, you could not reckon on her being exact as to what o'clock it was, let alone greater things.

Dr. James, who, by way of looking English on a Sunday, always went to church in a blue-tailed coat with brass buttons and a shirt-collar up to his ears, followed Mr. Lawson to our hotel after service, to shake hands with him, and press Mrs. Lawson to come to dinner too. Now, Mrs. Lawson had an English maid, who was always saying that she would have given up her place had she known "Missis would have gone on so long without a 'ead of 'air," by which she meant a wig, and she took the time when Mrs. Lawson was a little stirred by having, for the first time for many months, been asked out to dine to carry her point. Mr. Lawson wished his wife to go as a sign of good-will to Mr. James, and the poor lady, who had sat quiet in her sick chamber without "a 'ead of 'air," was all at once

eager to be like other people, and puzzled how to set about it. Though her maid would rather not have applied to Madame Charles, who, she was sure, made fun of any one ill-dressed, there was no doing without her. So, on Monday morning, the landlady was asked for advice and help; and, with a good-natured French readiness to make any one fit to be seen, she went herself to the best hairdresser in Tours, and brought him to measure Mrs. Lawson's head for a wig, to be ready in time for the dinner-party.

Now I had no fear but that, if I did put my hand to a plum-pudding, it would turn out a good one, for, living about in inns and lodgings, I had watched all sorts of cooks, and seen how those did who made good dishes, and what were the blunders of those who spoiled all they touched. Besides, I had sometimes been where I myself was bound to cook, if my master and mistress were to have anything set before them fit for eating. Thus I had learned something of most kinds of work, which has been of great use to me since, and kept my lodgings full, though stupid girls, both in France and England, have often told me I was silly to lend a hand to any sort of work but that which was named when I was hired.

Well, I was not in doubt of my skill, but, as most would be who have lived as servants, I was very much afraid of the cook, whose place it might be thought I

was taking. Wherever I have been, the cooks have had a fizz of the frying-pan in their temper, and would seem to have had it in old times, when the cook basted poor little Dick Whittington with her dripping ladle. I knew what English cooks were. One had thrown my own boxfull of coals at me, running after me to upset it, where I, not she, should be bound to clean it up, because I had set it down for an instant in her kitchen while I ran to give my mistress a note before she went out walking. Cook did not mind master or mistress, but threw the coal after me in their very sight. It is true Mrs. Richards gave her notice on the spot for such a want of respect; but I never forgot that cook, and I thought a French one might be still worse, and poison me if I meddled in her kitchen. So I said to my mistress that, if I were to make the pudding, I must first bargain that all should be put straight with the cook, and even then I would rather not be left alone with her in the kitchen.

"I will do my best for you," said Mrs. Richards, smiling. "I know, Mary, that as long as you live you will never forget that box of coal. It seems to me it would be best to make the pudding beforehand; for I remember that, when I was in France before, there were all sorts of hindrances besides the cook. I forget how it was, but I know our friends used to ask us to dine, and say we were to have a real English plum-

pudding; but it either came up like porridge, or turned out a sort of bread-pudding with a few raisins in it, but no spice or candied fruit. So let us begin early, and make sure we have the right things. Now, Mary, tell me what you shall want, and I will write all down, and give the list to Mrs. James."

When I had ended, Mrs. Richards said, "There are two things you have not named which may be harder to find than all the rest. One is a saucepan of a proper size, and the other a pudding-basin. They do not make suet or fruit puddings here. As little Bessy Lawson says, 'there are no nice pie-puddings in France as there are at home.'"

On her return, my mistress said, "Mary, Mrs. James is one of those who seem to think dinners cook themselves. She knows, though, that gowns do not make themselves, for I found her trying to put into poor Miss Goodman's puzzled head how her ill-made best gown might be brought to fit her. She said she 'supposed the dinner would come together, somehow.' I gave my list to the doctor, who has some warmth about him. He was reading up 'plum-pudding' in Dr. Kitchener's Cookery Book. He said he would see that his cook bought the right things. Most of the cooks here claim as their right to do all the marketing. Indeed, they draw a profit from it, for every time they change a five-franc piece (about four shillings), the tradesmen give

one or two sous on it. When ladies here discuss their servants, there is a kind of rivalry in each making out that she has the best marketer. Mr. James has a cook in great repute for bargaining, but he says it takes up more time than it's all worth, she haggles so long over a halfpenny. It's lucky she goes out to do it before five in the morning. She does, I assure you, and puts down her basket and says her prayers in church besides, before you girls are out of bed in England. Well, you are now to go to Mr. James, to see if they have a pan in the house that will do; and his cook is going to be very civil to you, and the doctor will talk for both."

I went as I was told. Mrs. James was good to me in her very quiet way, and said she should like to see me make the pudding. The doctor took me into the kitchen. It was floored with red tiles, which looked as if they had never known scrubbing. This made me quite afraid to look at the pans; but there I was wrong, for, however foul French floors may be, and they sometimes smell of dirt, it is not often you find anything dirty used in cooking. It did one's heart good to see the bright copper stewpans in Dr. James's kitchen. They did look so like good cooking, but not one of them was suited to my purpose. All were too shallow. At last I spied a metal soup-pot which I thought might do. The cook, who seemed very friendly, though I did not yet know enough French to catch much of what she said,

told her master that she could spare that, and use her old earthen soup-pot instead of it. Indeed, though it was fitting that rich houses like his should possess a metal soup-pot, or *marmite*, she for her part thought that the better soup came out of earthenware. I then said I should want a basin with a rim. She offered me various unlikely pitchers and pipkins, at which I shook my head. Mr. James said she should buy one, and I took my leave. The cook showed me to the door. She was a large girl from the country, in a short woollen jacket and petticoat, quite covered in front by a large and very clean white pinafore, with two deep pockets in front. She had put this on to do me honour. Her cap and collar were like snow, and all was clean but the floor; but each country has some part of the house which it prefers to leave dirty.

The next account from Dr. James was that his cook had come back to tell him that she could find nothing nearer to what I wanted than a wash-hand basin, and that there was no need to buy if Monsieur would lend his for the day. The doctor asked my mistress to let me go with him to the shop, and see if between us we could not find something that would do. The woman at the shop, full of interest in our plans, which had been thoroughly talked over between her and the cook, brought forth her wash-hand basin (of about a third the size of those used in England), which she pressed upon us

as "quite our affair"—the very thing we wanted. I could but shake my head. While her tongue ran on to Mr. James, I looked about at all the odd-shaped ware, of much of which I could not guess the use. I was so fresh from England, that my eye was shocked at seeing all the coffee-sets, and every dinner-set but one, of pure white. I thought white had a common look. I once lived with an English housemaid who had left a good place because the basin and jug in her bedroom were white, and the quilt coloured, which she said was "in a lower style than she had been used to." So the white looked to me not fit for gentlefolks. The dinner-set with a pattern was declared by the mistress to be a very new and splendid thing, and she ranged plate after plate before Mr. James in hope of tempting him to buy. On each was a different scene in the life of the first Napoleon, the Great Emperor. On the dishes and soup-tureen were his greatest battles, and you could follow his course step by step, or plate by plate, till you saw him a prisoner at the island of St. Helena, insulted by Sir Hudson Lowe, his gaoler, who was drawn grimacing at him, and moving his hands as if about to scratch the Emperor's face. Mr. James could not help laughing, and asking me if I thought any Englishman would ever put himself into so absurd a fighting posture.

"But it's just how they do here," said he. "You see two fellows in the street look as if they were going to

fly at each other at any instant; but it all ends in noise, bad names, and making faces."

Mr. Lawson, on a saunter along the street, here saw us, and came into the shop. He was at once smitten with some very large jugs, of the oddest shapes, which he said were of true Roman patterns.

"What a country!" he went on. "They call it changeable, but how little changes! Look at those fellows passing in *blouses*" (that is, loose outer shirts, of what we should call in England "butcher's blue"). "When Cæsar came, he found them wearing that garment. I must have one of each of those jugs."

Hid away behind his jugs, I found a basin which I said might suit my purpose. In England, I should not have thought such a coarse brown thing good enough to boil a plum-pudding in.

It was not such a trouble to make the pudding as to get together all the things needed for its making. I made it in a little room which opened on one side into Mrs. James's drawing-room, and on the other into the kitchen. The cook came in and out, and talked to me by signs; Mrs. James and Miss Goodman would drop in now and then, and ask if all was going right. Master Tom lounged on a chair by me, and told me all the troubles in store for him after Christmas, when he was to enter the college (or Lyceum, as they called it) as a boarder.

He had made friends with some English boys, who were day-scholars. They found it well enough, but told him that the boarders were watched night and day, and never left together without an usher in the room or playground.

"Just think of that!" groaned Tom. "Fellows must learn their lessons with a chap sitting up in a kind of pulpit in the middle of a big room, and turning round and round to all parts of the compass to see that they keep their eyes on their books. Low chaps, too, who know next to nothing themselves, for the great guns do nothing but teach, and leave the management to ushers. I wish my aunt had been an uncle, Mary! We did things in a different way at old Simon's. When we went first, he read us over a paper of rules, and we gave him our word of honour we would keep them."

"And did you all do so?"

"That's telling, Mary! Some of us did, at any rate, and those who did not were thought *lâche*."

"What does that mean, Master Tom?"

"Oh! something baser than base. I hate this Tours, Mary. It's white and dusty when it's dry, and how it pelts when it rains! They say there's some chance of a flood. I wish one would come and wash away that college"

It was true that people were saying that if these heavy showers by day, and steady rains by night, went

on much longer, we should have a great flood, such as is undergone, from time to time, by all the towns on the banks of the Loire.

The weather kept us very much indoors, and we were worse off than the rest, being quite apart in our pavilion; to see or be seen, we must cross the courtyard in a thumping rain. They did tell me Tours had a great name for being dry. All I can say is, that when it did rain there, it rained with a will. One night it thundered and lightened; I thought I had never seen such lightning. Next morning I was glad I had been shut off from the rest, for all Biddy's friends, that is, the old women who cleaned pots and pans, and a girl or two who did odd jobs, had crowded into her room, and sat up half the night in abject fear of the storm.

Biddy, from hearing me talk, was smitten with a great desire to have some part of her own in Mr. James's dinner. She said she wished to back me up, and see my glory when the plum-pudding was put on the table, and have some change for herself from black thoughts of the good woman who was buried (meaning her late mistress), and the bad man over the sea (her own husband). By hook or crook, or both, she did manage to make it clear to Dr. James that she was the very woman to help in the kitchen on the day of his dinner, and to stand between his cook and myself, seeing she spoke both French and English. I was to help to

wait, and to take charge of Nora and Harry Dennis, up to the hour of dinner, when they were to drink tea with Bessy Lawson, and keep her company in the absence of her mamma. Early in the morning, Dr. James called to say he should be glad if I would go to his house to give my last orders about my own pudding, which still needed boiling again for some hours before it would be fit to serve. I took Nora and Harry with me by way of giving them a walk. I had cause to wish I had left them behind, for as soon as ever Nora was in the room, she spied two bottles of very choice old Port wine, which Mr. James had wrapped up in flannel, and laid near his wife's fire. The mischievous child made a rush at them, caught one up in each hand, and, twitching some of those squares of crochet-work, or muslin, which some people call "tidies," off the chair-backs, dressed the bottles up as "babies" in a twinkling, and capered about, dandling one on each arm.

Mrs. James set up a helpless wail. "Oh, what will the doctor say! He said they must not be stirred on any account!"

Miss Goodman jumped up to give chase, which made matters worse, for, after running round and round the table, Nora darted through the door, and upstairs. There she was met by the doctor, who brought back his precious bottles. He eyed them with a very rueful look, and said, "after the shaking they had had from

that girl (who ought to be well shaken herself), they were no more fit for drinking than John Gilpin's wine could have been after all that ride of his. France held no such wine, and those were nearly his last bottles!"

Nora could so little understand the nature of the mischief she had done, that she seemed more afraid than I had ever yet seen her. I got her away as quickly as I could, and, knowing that being out in the fresh air works off a great deal of the tempers and naughtiness of children, I took a long walk, coming back by the great bridge that I might see the swollen river. How the muddy water did rush along, bringing with it trees, pieces of timber, and fragments that looked as if they had been washed from farm-yards or cottages! As they shot the arches, my eyes, dazzled with looking, led me to fancy the bridge was shaking, but I believe there was no trembling, unless it were in some of the narrow arches which are dry in summer. At any rate there were doubts of the bridge, for at either end men were posted to prevent mere lookers-on from crossing. Even those who had a real need to cross were told that there was thought to be risk, and difficulties were made at letting them go by. Just as we came up, a troop of little girls, all dressed alike, carrying baskets filled with pots, pans, clothing, and bedclothes, and most of them having great rolls of bread, a yard long, stuck under their arms, besides, were brought to a halt by these

watchers of the bridge, just as they were going to cross. Two or three women, in the dress of Sisters, were in parley with the men. Mr. Lawson, quite behind, was talking to some more of the Sisters. Bessy ran to meet our children, and was followed by her father, who said these were children brought up by the society of St. Vincent de Paul. They were quitting their house in Tours for another they had in the country, where they were used to go during the great heats of summer. When they rose that morning, they had seen the water rising in the garden of the house next their own. They knew their turn would come next, and had hastily put together all they could carry, knowing they should find a bare house where they were going.

"Poor little things," said Mr. Lawson, "I dare say some of them think it fun, and a pleasant break to lessons. They have a two hours' walk before them, but the Sisters say, 'No doubt kind people will give a lift in their carts to the younger children, and carry the heavier goods, as they did at the last great flood, for their house lying low, by the river, they are used to this kind of thing.' The watchers have doubts about letting so many cross at one time."

The whole length of the Royal Street people were bustling to get all ready for a flood. Such a moving as there was of barrels from cellars, such a clearing of goods from shops to upper stories!

Mr. Lawson, who seemed to have friends at every turn (all the nicest people in the world, and speaking French with the purest of accents), made slow progress, stopping often to talk, and, midway up the street, taking us all into the shop of one of his great friends, a pastrycook, where he treated us to all sorts of dainty sweet things, which he shared himself, with a pleasure it did one good to see in a gentleman with so white a head.

The poor woman of the shop was in sad trouble at the stoppage of her trade. "There was no knowing," she said, "how many days she might lose." Her husband was at that moment moving all that could be moved of his cooking things upstairs.

Mr. Lawson tried to comfort her by repeating what he had been told as he came along, that, though it was best to put all goods easily spoilt into safe places, this was not looked upon as likely to be anything like so great a flood as had often been known at Tours. Some dyke, a few miles up the river, had been cut, he was told. This would lay the country north-west of Tours under water, and save that city itself.

It seemed as if he had been told truly, for, at the other end of the street, instead of people tramping out of Tours, we found the country folk flocking in. You would have thought there was going to be some great market, or fair, or cattle-show, or all three. They came from two or three flooded villages, with their wives, and their

little ones—their flocks and their herds. Those who had upper rooms had stowed their furniture and that of their neighbours as high as they could, locked doors, and waded away in haste, driving before them wading cattle. Horses, with men at their heads to lead them, drew carts, holding the sick, the aged, the women and children, soup-pots and pipkins, clothes and bedding—and the goats and pigs!

I had often watched these very carts coming along the Boulevard early in the morning, bringing in the fuel and food of Tours. My master had told me he knew I was drawn to them by their being so like Irish carts. I never was in my own country, but I thought they must have odd carts there if they were like these. For the most part they were very long, and hung low on very large wheels, and it seemed as if it did not matter to which end you harnessed your horse, for two long poles stuck out at either end to balance the cart. There was nothing at the sides but an open railing, with a windlass to load the sacks of grain which were the cart's most common freight, and a sort of stage, or wooden cage swung below, on which the pigs made their journeys. That day it was not thought safe to trust them down below, so they rode in state for once. Another kind of cart had solid sides like those we see in England, but was covered with a kind of hood of coarse, brown, home-made stuff, stretching from end to end, with so little

allowance for height that the drivers had to duck their heads the whole way they went, and those who would be at ease sat at the bottom of the cart in a kind of dark cavern.

I could have looked for long, it was so strange a moving of house, but all these things stirred some fear in me, and I began to ask Mr. Lawson if there was no risk for our hotel. He told me not, from what he could learn. These rises of the river were very partial.

"Ah, there was the Préfet.* He should get the best account now."

The Préfet was full of bustle, for in the midst of his struggle to find lodgment for these poor people driven from their homes, in had ridden a horseman from Blois, passing on the message sent post-haste by the Préfet of Orleans,† when he found the rise of the river, to warn all dwellers by the Loire to make ready for a great flood.

"He tells me," said Mr. Lawson, "that he has just sent off a man on horseback to Angers, which will, in its turn, give the warning to Nantes.

"Dear me! it reminds me of my young days. When the water covered a certain rock in our north-country

* A French Préfet is something like a Lord Lieutenant of an English county. He is paid, however, by the State, and a house found for him in the chief town of the district of which he is the head.

† Notice of the rise of the Loire is now sent by telegraph.

mountain-river, my father, who was the squire and magistrate of the parish, used to send a man on his best horse across country to warn the nearest town.

"The Préfet thinks we shall have nothing serious unless these rains continue, and even then not for some days to come.

"It would take a high flood, indeed, to affect us at the hotel; so Mary, as it is beginning to rain again, you had best take the children home. I am going to follow these poor people down as far as the Archbishop's palace. The good man has offered to take them in, cattle and all. He has great courtyards and outbuildings, which are little used since church incomes have been cut down, and his house, like the cathedral, lies on high ground, a dry patch floods never reach.

"It is better to come off bag or baggage, as these have done, than be driven nine or ten together into one upper room, as used to be the case with some in our parish. I remember one poor cottage, parted into two dwellings, with a trap-door, that they might pass from one to the other when a flood came; and it was thought a great advance when windows were put in on purpose for the people to get out of."

I can say for certain, that all three children went home with me, and upstairs to see my mistress, who beckoned them from the window. When I had done telling her all I had seen, I looked round and missed

Nora. Hearing a kind of screech in the courtyard, I ran to the window, and saw that trouble of a child flying about pursued by Mrs. Lawson's maid. It turned out that, while I was talking, she had made off, looking about for any bit of mischief she could find to do, and come upon Mrs. Lawson's Sarah, having a kind of talk on the landing with the hairdresser's young man, who had brought her mistress's wig, "which I went for myself," said Sarah, "early this blessed morning, and that we might be sure to have it, asked two English ladies in the shop to be so kind as to put it into nice pure French, that master and missis did wish most pertic'ler for to have that there 'ead of 'air very early in the day, as they were agoing to a peace-making dinner, with that there old doctor as wears the high shirt-collars."

What does Nora do but snatch the wig from the hand of Sarah, who was giving it a few words of praise and a few looks of approval, before taking it into her mistress's room, and make off with it to the court where she put it on at leisure, stuck the parrot on the top of all, and careered about. Seeing me and the man, and Madame Charles's nursemaid join Sarah, she ran up the chief staircase, the only way we did not bar, and made for the window, whence she had often wished to reach for the blossom of magnolia. The stick with which the landlady had hooked the branch was still standing by the open window. She caught it, stuck the wig on the end,

and tried to put it on the topmost branch of the tree. But, too short of arm, and pressed by our hot and quick pursuit, she missed her mark, and the wig fell into a great bucket of water down below.

On hearing us all declare it to be spoilt, and quite unfit for wear, Nora ran off as hard as she could, passing through the great doorway, and along the street towards the Boulevard. I followed her, so did the French nurse-maid. We both knew where she would go.

Just outside the town Madame Charles had a garden, and a field or two where a cow was kept that she might have pure milk to give her baby, which was very sickly. The great fun of all the children was to see this cow milked, and, before now, Nora, when in a worse scrape than usual, had been known to hide in its shed, and make attempts of her own to milk it. Biddy used to coax her back with sweets, but we agreed (Jeanne and I as we ran) that we would try rougher ways. We caught her at last, and taking hold of her on each side, brought her back to the hotel, and put her to bed at once. I took away all her clothes, locked her in, and gave the key to Jeanne, whose room was close by.

It was time for me to dress my mistress. Poor Mrs. Lawson had given up all thoughts of going. Her maid had run screaming to tell her of Nora's naughty prank, and made her quite ill with fear it might be something worse, some harm to her husband or child. Sarah made

excuse for having upset her mistress by saying that she could not help it. "It did make her own 'air stand on end to think what that child had done to missis's 'ead of 'air."

I did not see her hair stand on end, but I dare say she felt as if it did. Mr. Lawson was unwilling to leave his wife at home, and so used to see her without hair, that he urged her going, wig or no wig. She had grown timid from long illness, and had all at once started from sitting quietly without hair, to a sense that she was unlike the rest of the world, and not fit to face other ladies; so she was left behind with little Harry playing about her on the floor, and telling her that when he was a "large gentleman he should ride horses, sail boats, and wear a blue coat with brass buttons on Sundays, like Dr. James."

Bessy and he got on very well. As for Nora, she was told that if she made no noise she should have her meals as usual; but if she played any pranks, she should wait for her food till Biddy came home.

Our dinner had been much talked of in the hotel, and though they were used to dinners and breakfasts, and comings and goings, I may say they took an interest in my pudding. Mr. James had planned what he called an "union dinner" (this he explained, for he *was* an odd gentleman, by pointing out in the drapers' shops a French contrivance called an "union suit," by which a

woollen vest and drawers were run into one garment). His was to be "an union DINNER"—the good things of two countries, not the thin soup and the ragged beef, but the good, strong, fat soup of France, the *potage gras*, such as would do good to a man's heart, with as good a bit of roast beef cut in the English way as he could find in Tours, and the pride of the French kitchen, the turkey stuffed with truffles."

These truffles are underground mushrooms, mostly black in colour, found among sand in the south of France. Pigs are trained to hunt for them. When a poor pig, who is by nature very fond of them, scents one down below, and begins to grub for it with his nose, up steps his master, and pockets for sale the dainty the pig had hoped to swallow. Then there was one of Miss Goodman's fine home-cured hams. I wished my master and mistress had eaten more of it, to avoid the trouble it had given us. When it came to the salad, which, in France, is served every day towards the end of dinner, Mr. Lawson said he had been told that a great deal of salad oil pressed from walnuts was sold in Tours, and that the poorer people not only bought it for cheapness, but liked it better, and thought it sweeter than olive oil.

"So they do," said Mr. James. "The person who told you so was quite right in what he said. For my own part, I think their salads the best things they have. You can go on with salads all the year round. All the

weeds round Tours go into the salad bowl, and come out good—*good*, sir, and *wholesome*. The walnut oil does for those brought up to it. The olive oil is better—Mr. Lawson, sir, you are surely going to have some salad?—but, for my own part, I always mix my salads with castor oil, which I prefer to all other salad mixtures."

Mr. Lawson, who, in civil compliance with his host, was helping himself to some lettuce, let drop salad-spoon and fork, pushed his spectacles half-way up his forehead, brushed his front hair up on end, and said—or would have said, but the doctor caught him up—"Oh! don't be afraid; what I offer *you* is mixed with olive oil; I merely speak of how I mix it for my own eating."

One of the Frenchmen said that "it was, then, the English custom to mix their salads with the oil of castor?"

"Oh no! never!" cried all the English voices.

"Then, perhaps, Dr. James's love for his noble calling to heal mankind disposed him to dwell with pleasure on, and even to relish at table, an agent of his healing art?"

"Or perhaps," said another Frenchman, "our friend likes to take bane and antidote together?"

"By no means," shouted the doctor, growing testy. "Not at all—nothing of the kind. It is purely a matter of taste, I tell you—of taste and liking. I *like* my salads best with castor oil, and, on that account, buy it as pure

as it can be had ; but I make allowance for the prejudice of others. There! Have some Vouvray wine, good folks, and don't look so white and uncomfortable."

What a thing for Mr. James to say, when I was so near putting my pudding on the table! I could see several uneasy faces, and I quite gave a shudder myself. I was glad to see them drink that sparkling white wine. By-and-by, when they had lost the taste of castor oil in their mind's mouth, all did justice to my pudding. I could see that the Frenchmen liked it as much as they said they did. They had come bent on trying all the English dishes; and when, after dinner, Mr. James must needs have them sit over their wine after the English fashion, they made themselves up to do it with a courage that did honour to their nation. They suffered Mr. James to fill them bumpers of his precious Port, though they said they had never before drunk the wine of Porto, except out of those little glasses used for brandy. After a few more glasses, the chief of them said that he thought so well of all he had tasted that, had Mr. James assured him that it was the English custom to dress salads with castor oil, he should have eaten some at once!

In the kitchen my pudding was praised in the most handsome manner by the French cook, who drank my health in a glass of Vouvray. Biddy was returning thanks for me in a mixture of French, English, and Irish,

when in rushed Master Tom, shouting, "Hurrah, Mary! It's all under water! The college washed away; the hotel floating along the road to Spain, with all your best gowns in it; and your kids, Biddy, and Dame Lawson and her wig into the bargain!"

Biddy set up a cry which ran into a howl. I told her I knew his ways too well to believe him.

"Go and see for yourself, Miss Mary. You have only to walk to the end of the street. I went to have a cigar and look into a café with a fellow or two I know here (before being locked up in that Lyceum, you know), and found it was a case of swimming for it. Now let me go and frighten the rest."

They were so very jolly, and Mr. James so pooh-poohed floods, and pressed them to let him draw another cork, that I do not think any one would have even crossed a street to see what was going on, had it not been for Mr. Lawson. He was too uneasy about his wife to listen to Mr. James, who kept telling him that, whatever came, *his* house lay high and dry, as safe as the Archbishop's, more safe than that of the Préfet. He could take us all in, and would. "Sit still, man. We are used to floods here."

There was no keeping Mr. Lawson back; and we women did not think there ought to be, when his wife had been so ill, and had such a turn that very day.

When he went, all were moved to follow—Biddy and I after the rest.

The water had risen some way up our street, which went down into the Rue Royale from the square of the cathedral with a slope so gentle that, at other times, you would hardly observe that the ground rose at all. Without wading, there was no getting to the Royal Street to see what was going on in it. Nothing met the eye but the dull oil lamps, slung across the street, and reflected in the water. On looking up, you saw lights moving in the upper rooms, as if no one had gone to bed, though it was now near midnight. We could only look, and wonder how things were at our hotel, and whether it could still be reached. Tom offered to swim into the courtyard, and give any message we wished to send. His aunt raised her voice to forbid him. One of the Frenchmen said, "There was a chance the water might not have reached the lower end of the street; by crossing to the Boulevard—which could be done in ten minutes—we might perhaps reach the hotel even now." But, sure enough, the river was there too, and there was no knowing how deep it might be.

All who knew Tours agreed that this was indeed a great flood, and thought that some dyke must be broken, as they did not remember to have seen so sudden a rise before.

It was settled that the next thing to be done was to

make for the Préfet's house, where we should learn what could be done, and perhaps find help.

We started again, but had not gone far when we were hailed by a man picking his way along garden walls by light of a lantern. He proved to be a waiter, sent from our hotel by Mrs. Lawson, who had paid him high to give her husband warning of the flood. The waiter said, "Madame was in much concern. She dreaded that Monsieur's shortness of sight might permit him to get into the water before he knew where he was. He was to tell Monsieur, from her, on no account to be rash, but to come to her as soon as he could, as she could not rest till she knew him to be safe.

"At the hotel all was in bustle. They had been taken by surprise, and had not, dark as it was, been able to move the casks from the cellars, where they were floating about, knocking each other finely. The cooks were shifting their tackle; the waiters were moving the scores of plates, glasses, and so forth, needed in the great dining-room, to upper rooms.

"He had dropped from a window (lighting on a wall some feet below), and, knowing well his Tours, had made his way—a roundabout way, he must admit—from one garden wall to another. He should take Monsieur back in the same with safety, and even with ease, if Monsieur would mount the wall."

"Then some one must give me a back," said Mr.

Lawson, putting down his umbrella, and fixing his spectacles more firmly on his nose.

No one could help smiling to see a short-sighted Oxford clerk in holy orders making ready to pick his way like a puss (in shiny, thin boots), or a boy bent on stealing apples, along a slippery, wet garden wall. All cried out he must not risk it.

The waiter said he was sure he could take Mr. Lawson to his wife, without any broken bones, if that reverend gentleman would hold tight on to his coat-tail; but Mr. Lawson was so urged to try some other means, that at last he let the waiter go as he came, sending his wife a message that somehow he should reach her that very night.

Just as the waiter bent his way back along the walls, up came a man wearing huge fisherman's boots.

Our waiter had (it turned out in the end) shirked his proper work of helping to move tables and chairs out of the wet, and got out of window for fear of being stopped by Madame Charles more than from any real need so to do.

The new-comer had Madame's orders to let us know that, if we made haste, he might still be able to carry us, one by one, through the water, and land us safe and dry in our own rooms. He had lost time, no doubt, having just reached the house of Dr. James as we had left it, and tried to find us in two or three quarters. Still he would try.

Mr. Lawson looked at the man, who was low and broad, and said, "I think, my friend, if you would lend me your boots, I should like to wade across better than to be carried."

"You think him not the man to carry two such tall stout Englishmen as yourself and Richards?" said Dr. James, chuckling. "Ah! he's wiry, though. Still a boat would be better than walls or wading. Let us go on to the Préfet's. We are almost certain to find one there. My good man, come with us. We may want you yet." So said, so done. The gentlemen went on to the house of the Préfet, and we women went back to Mrs. James.

She had never stirred from her sofa, and seemed to think we were all making a fuss about nothing, though she did admit that these floods were unpleasant. "She should like," she said, "to return to England. Things were better there; but England had three great drawbacks—the rawness of the climate, the hurry people were in (even ladies walking quickly!), and the bad way in which the dressmakers made gowns."

After what seemed to us a very long time, my master came back. He said they had found the Préfet very civil. As the English had no consul at Tours, the Préfet had more to do with them and their affairs than would be the case in seaport towns. The Préfet owned that they had been taken by surprise. It had been

thought that boats would not be wanted unless it were in the streets close to the river. Boats had now been sent for to bring off people who were at a ball given in one of the great houses on the Boulevard. Our party might be taken in one to the hotel, unless it would prefer waiting for daylight, which he should advise.

Mr. Lawson chose to go at once, rather than leave his wife to work herself into a state of alarm that might be hurtful to her health. My master had closed with Dr. James's offer to find room for us all. He thought there was "nothing to make it worth our while to go boating at midnight in search of beds in a damp hotel. It was quite another case for Lawson, who had to think of his wife, or Biddy, who must go to her children."

"But Mrs. Richards has her gowns!" put in Mrs. James, not from any wish to get rid of us, for I do not think she cared how many were quartered in her house, so long as she was not troubled.

"Oh! Anne won't mind her gowns," said my master. "All English made, Mrs. James, not worth a regret. Now, Biddy, you must come along with me to the Préfet's house. No risk at all, Miss Goodman, I assure you, unless it be the risk of running aground now and then."

Miss Goodman went to direct and I to help the getting ready rooms needed for us poor waifs and strays cast by a flood into unlooked-for quarters. By-and-by back came my master with Dr. James, who shouted for supper.

"He found floods as good as hunting, famous for making your food digest twice as soon as usual," and a good supper they both made, while we women wondered they could eat so much so soon after a good dinner.

Miss Goodman being out of the room, no one missed Master Tom for some time. He, too, came in quite ready for supper.

"This was the only bit of fun he had been in since he came to Tours. He had gone in the boat with Mr. Lawson; that good, absent man never saw him till they had pushed off, and the fishermen took him to be one of those they were hired to convey to the hotel. He took the steering.

"Such fun it was to go along the middle of the Boulevard between the rows of trees! He thought it must be like Venice. The French treated the flood as if it were a fête" (or festival, as we say in English). "Old and young were out on their balconies, which they had lit up with every kind of lamp, candle, and lantern they could find. They talked from one house to another. At more than one there was music and dancing. Tom did not think Venice could be prettier, though the parson said 'it was more like Holland.' Parson thought it tedious; the boat getting aground every now and then. Tom saw him and the Irishwoman into the hotel, and would have liked to go and bring off some of those pretty girls at the ball, but the fishermen had found him out, and would not allow themselves the pleasure of his

company any longer. How jolly it would be to hire a boat, and row up and down those tiresome streets!"

Next day did see many a boat in the streets of Tours. Every one who could started a boat—some to make money by plying from point to point, and taking food or letters to those who were shut up in the upper stories of their houses; others to see what could be seen and get what amusement could be had in so wet a world. Some gentlefolks whose estates lay round Tours boated across their own fields to see what was happening to their friends within that city.

In most cases it ended in a long talk from boat to balcony or window. Sometimes a cord was let down, and food or letters tied to it, but very few went into the houses; for though men could be found to fix ladders, ladders were scarce, and the men charged high for their trouble. This was in the first hurry, for, later on, the Préfet set parties of soldiers to work, and you could everywhere see the short, active, little men running up and down with food for those who staid in their houses, and help for such as wished to leave them. It was said that a soldier who had saved three lives had himself been drowned, and that he was to be buried with great honours.

The boys of Mettray (that Reformatory of which I had heard from Bridget) made themselves useful in saving people's goods. They had run such risks of

growing up to steal them, that it was a pleasure to see how well they took their training to do good instead of harm.

As few but the rich had houses all to themselves, for the most part living each in a story approached by a common staircase, one could not but wonder how they got on now that those below were driven by the flood to crowd the rooms of their neighbours above. Dr. James said they would do better than we should expect, or would do in their place. The habit of running in and out of each other's rooms, and making up little card parties every night, kept them neighbourly, and ready to oblige each other. Out of door work was of course stopped, but the cathedral service went on the same as ever, and some came from the town to their usual prayers, boating so far as the water reached up the streets sloping from where the great church stood high and dry, the only one in Tours that had breasted a worse flood—the Revolution—without hurt or harm.

On asking how long the flood was likely to last, and learning there might be at least a week of discomfort, my master and mistress made up their minds to seek lodgings rather than put Mrs. James out of her way. People in France are not in the habit of asking others to take "pot-luck," or finding them beds in a hurry, as is often done in England. You would cause much surprise did you seem to expect it (even from far more active

housewives than Mrs. James), and find them very ill provided with nearly all things but bed and table-linen, of which they make it their pride to gather great stores. I think, besides, we were all afraid of Dr. James's taste in salads. On the other hand, it was thought far too dismal to return to our pavilion, cut off from the rest, so that we should have had to boat across the court every time we wished to give an order or see a friend; so a boat was hired, and we pushed along the Rue Royale to our hotel, where we had to wait some time before we could enter the courtyard. Flood or no flood, the hotel went on, and people travelled; they had to go farther round, that was all.

It was a great diligence just entering the court that kept our men lying on their oars. No one had chosen to risk riding inside. The passengers sat on the roof, and some rode the horses. Ah! what a noise there was of French tongues! What a skirmish to get people and luggage down, and down dry! At last it was all done, and we had our turn of trouble to get out and in. I half clambered, half was lifted up our stairs, and set about packing our boxes, while my master paid the bill, and my mistress paid a visit to Mrs. Lawson. She had gone into the rooms we found so noisy that first night of ours in Tours; quiet enough just now. When her fright was over, she found the flood the greatest break she had had since she saw the fireworks on the King's

birthday. She changed from window to window, and watched all that stirred. The worst was, her child was fretful from want of air and movement, and Biddy's two were very noisy and troublesome.

"Biddy was full of you, Mary," said my mistress. "I told her you were well, but that Dr. James's cook complains that your pudding has lodged in the upper part of her chest. She told me this morning (putting her hands to the place), 'It is very good, that pudding; but it does not descend.'"

Madame Charles did not like our leaving, and would give my master no help to find lodgings, professing to know of none in Tours except those in a house belonging to her husband, which was as much under water as the hotel. It was part of his good nature to take her, as he did, back with us in the boat. You see he found her in a fret about her baby. It was ill, and all was put down to its suffering from want of cow's milk. The cow kept for it had been forgotten in the bustle, and left for so long a time to stand in a shed full of water, that, when brought off, it was ill enough to make it unsafe to give its milk to the baby. Madame Charles thought that, by going to the country-folk at the Archbishop's, she might find a supply of milk till her own cow got well. We went with her to see the camp round the Archbishop's palace. It was something between a gipsy's tent and a farm-shed. We got there at meal-

time. They were all eating, with great contentment, soup made out of doors, in earthen pots, over movable grates, or slices of their great country loaves covered with a Tours dainty, much liked by working people, strips of fried pork put into jars filled up with meltings of pork fat (the *rillons* and *rillettes* well known to those who visit Tours). An old woman, whose means did not allow her to buy this foremost treat of the town, had yet spent a few sous to buy the next best thing—its trimmings—and left her meal somewhat loth, but very anxious to turn a penny, on hearing Madame Charles ask about cow's milk.

"It was a goat the lady wanted, not a cow. Every one knew goat's milk was better for children. Though it would cost much to her feelings, she would give up for the charming baby of whom Madame spoke one of her own goats—one that suckled a child of her own daughter who was dead. Her daughter had left two children. Both were nursed by goats. Madame should see. It was a pretty sight!"

Here she pushed at two bundles of clothes till they rolled over, and showed the faces (as much as was left uncovered by the borders of about three caps each) of two chubby children. Each was sucking a bit of bread covered with the pounded pork I have described before. Next she gave a cry for the goats, who were resting as far under cover of a cart as they could well get.

"Ah!" said a voice behind us, that of Dr. James; "the goats know well there's going to be another shower. Goats are more afraid of a drop of rain than any other living creatures but hens and Yankees. Fact, ma'am — fact!" This was to my mistress. "You'll see."

Another cry brought the goats from their shelter. When they saw why they were wanted they seemed rather pleased than otherwise. Each trotted to the side of its own child, and laid down. The old woman brought two mats out of her cart, spread one by each goat, and put the children to lie on them, and suck to the content of both goats and children. One goat would not suckle the other's child, and Dr. James doubted if either would take to a strange baby.

"From what I see," said he, addressing the horses and donkeys about him, "you are the only fellows who make a holiday out of all this. You are fed as usual, and have nothing to do. Make the most of it while you can."

Dr. James was right about the goats, which one and both refused to suckle Madame Charles's baby; that is, they did not make things pleasant, and she had to fall back on cow's milk.

I often went to the Archbishop's during the rest of our stay at Tours. It was all one could do, unless one went to mass. The gentry amused themselves with

trying how many streets they could enter in a boat, and talked of nothing but how many inches the river rose or fell daily. My master said, when the roads were open we should go on to Nantes. At present, tiresome as it was where we were, we might be worse off. So general was the discomfort, that many people who had been loitering at Tours found, all at once, they had got the little push needed to make them leave that cheerful, quiet city. Mrs. Lawson began to feel as if she were now well enough to proceed to Pau; but her husband's packing took some time and fretted her so much, that Madame Charles talked her into hiring a *packer*, a man who came in, and under Mr. Lawson's eye wrapped in paper, and bedded in straw, the curious things he had gathered by the way.

During the flood my master used to wonder how things went with his poor barber, a man who lived in the Royal Street. This barber used every day to tell my master, "Tours, sir, is a city where one is aware that one is living!" About twice a week he would vary this by saying, "Sir, you may exist at other places, but you *live* at Tours!" His was the first shop Mr. Richards entered after the flood settled down, and his was the first chin poor Symphorian had shaved since it began. My master did nothing but laugh when he thought of the grimaces made by this barber while telling how his customers had seized the chance of saving some half-

pence by letting their beards grow under the paltry pretence of a wretched flood—a flood! Bah! He had sent his "clients" a notice informing them that they might be shaved as usual if they would mount to the first floor by a ladder, which he should provide at the small charge of one halfpenny for each ascent. No extra charge would be made for the better light of the first floor, or the spectacle of the boats in the Rue Royale. Could anything be more fair?

"Sir, had I possessed a ladder of my own (as I will by the time there is another flood), I should not have put on that halfpenny, but taken it out of them in oils and essence; but those who have ladders, as you can understand, raise a frightful tax at these times. Sir, I had to pay high to have that ladder, and they did not come, the niggards! I shall have them in a crowd on Sunday morning with long beards, sir; yes, sir, with long beards! Picture that to yourself! An Englishman, sir, would have scorned the halfpenny, and climbed that ladder for love of adventure! You do not know how sous are cherished in France. Every one of my subscribers will try to make me deduct from his monthly payment as many fees as he has missed times of being shaved under the excuse of a flood!"

My master did not quite know what all this meant, but, by putting questions, made out that it was not the custom in France, as it is in England, for gentlemen to

keep razors of their own, but that the way is to pay a little sum monthly to a barber, who undertakes to keep their chins shaven, and to give their hair *un petit coup de peigne* (a little hit with the brush and comb) into the bargain.

One morning my mistress said I was to go with Dr. James's cook to see a grand wedding. Jeanne had been fretting because a plan of her own for marrying had been thwarted, and Mrs. James seemed to think that looking at some fine clothes would raise her spirits. On my way to the doctor's house I saw Biddy coming as fast as she could to meet me. She threw up her hands and began talking to me long before I came close enough to make out what she said. It was all to tell me that her master's sister had come late last night, and "brought marching orders; and wasn't she a *jineral*, too! It was she knew well how to give the word of command! 'Here, Bridget,' and 'There, Bridget,' for she was too jintale to call me 'Biddy,' and the poor children must be checked when they did so, as came nateral from their sweet mouths. And it's 'Bridget, you don't surely allow Miss Nora to eat them unwholesome bombows?'" (For so Biddy, though she had lived so long in France, always pronounced the word "bonbons.") "And it's 'Bridget, do you permit Master Harry to run in the courtyard without his cap?' I am under the rule of the Saxon, that I am, this morning,

lass! She has brought her English domineering ways over the sea with her. Lass, when I came out she wanted to clap an old bonnet of her own on my head, and said that, to see me out of doors in a French cap, no one would take me for the servant of a respectable English family. 'But,' says I, 'ma'am,' says I, 'I'll take your orders about the children (though, perhaps, when you've lived as long in France as I have, ye'll know that they may sit out of doors, or run out into the air, without wraps, as they couldn't do in England), but not the masther's self (and far would *he* be from wishing it!) could make me give up my good name by putting on a bonnet. I *am* a decent married woman, if I'm not a widow, and I'm not going to hurt my character by dressing above my station.' Why, it's you yourself, Mary Ryan, I've had to spake up for (and sharp I did it too), for one of the quarrels that her young man picked with Dr. James's cook was that she should have been seen walking with you, who wore a bonnet. And if you go to Nantes, as you say, you'll find yourself more talked about there than at Tours, where they are more used to the English ways. If you'll take a hint from a friend, you'll do as I've done for these years and years, and wear a cap for the sake of peace and a good name. It's not I would be advising any young woman to marry, but you might like a young man to walk with you just to give you the look

of being courted, and keep the other girls from crowing over you, and, if you'll believe me, no steady workman will walk with you if you wear a bonnet; so give it up, or you'll get nothing better than one of those fellows who are never out of the wine-shop."

I said, rather shortly, that what I had told her of my history went more to show that I ran away from marriage than that I rushed at it.

"True for you," said Biddy; "but still you might like some one to tase a little, and I'd do my best to help you to one as did you credit to be seen with, and I'd look on with pleasure if you vexed him, and think you were making one man pay a little for the wrongs another of them did me. Lass, you'd never square that account if ye drove half a dozen of them to hang themselves! But I like your sinse, and glad I would be if I could find you a good match, and settle you near me in Nantes. I'll spake to the priest when I go back. It's they find husbands and wives for the rich folks. If you've saved money you may marry a tradesman, and then you can wear your bonnet with the best of them. That is, if you marry the right kind of tradesman, for it's not all trades will do. I knew two sisters, butcher's daughters, who were kind with one another as kind could be, till one married a watchmaker and the other a baker. Then came heart-burnings, for one sister might wear her bonnet like a lady, and the other must not presume.

Now, I'll jist go in with you, and see how Jeanne takes on, but as for me going to weddings—it's one too many I've been to, already."

Jeanne, who was a quiet girl of easy temper, did not admit that she was fretting. She said, "There were plenty more of his sex. With her grandmother's home-spun linen, and the five hundred francs (or twenty pounds) she had saved, she could always marry herself. I was not to distress myself at my name having been brought in by that good-for-nothing! It was only one of his numerous vilenesses. She had been warned by her family that he was seeking excuses to break off the match. She had shut her eyes, misled by a partial feeling which (she thought) we would excuse when she told us that he was a very good cook, and cleaner of rooms. For herself, she was weary of the stewpan. She had been brought up in the country, and she thought that, by taking a husband who could do the housework, she might refresh, repose, and amuse herself for a season by working in the fields."

"But there are more than he can cook!" said Biddy. "Come with me, and I'll show you a young man who can do that, and most things besides. I'll tell him of your money and other good pints. I left him in his white cook's apron, helping the chief male housemaid to make the beds, and he'd have unpacked his commander's boxes if she'd have let him. Come with me, and I'll

let you have a look at him; and Mrs. Lawson's Sarah will be glad to go along with you to the wedding. She was full of it last night, but this morning I've not had time to throw a word at her, or at any one else, I've been so kept on my drill."

I was for going straight to the church; but Jeanne, in a solid, business-like manner, said she should like to have a look at the *parti*, that is, the young man Biddy had named to her for a match; so we all three turned our steps to the hotel. By the way, Biddy soothed me by saying that the bonnet of Mrs. Lawson's maid would keep mine from looking out of the way, and comforted the cook by telling her to bear in mind that, as her young man had left her now, he would never have the chance of doing so after marriage. As for Ernest, this young man of whom she had spoken, "he was a Nantes boy she knew well. The masther took him into Spain as his own valet and cook and housekeeper, for it seemed Spain was a queer country. When you came tired of a night to your inn, you had to start off to buy your own dinner, which was mostly pork chops, and fry them yourself you might, if you wanted them so as they could be eaten. So the masther took Ernest to buy them and fry them, and save him all the trouble; and he had been in England, too. The masther had trusted him to bring his sister over (but she'd lead a troop of horse, and needed no masther or man to take care of her !), and he

was to help her to move the dear children and me, Biddy, who spake to you, back to Nantes. And to show you what she is, I've caught myself wishing myself with my bad husband in the States more than once since she came, and that is but a matter of twelve hours!"

We found Mrs. Lawson's Sarah a good deal out of humour. She said she was "that worrited with a job of packing her master had given her to do, that she felt quite all-overish. For her part, she did think them learned men, like Mr. Lawson, were not so wise as other people. Not 'real clever' (as Sarah implied herself and the present company to be), 'only cracky clever.' If she had known she should have had to put up with such odd whims and characters as those of Mr. and Mrs. Lawson, she would have taken a good place she might have had near her own home. However, she should not bear it all much longer. France would soon see the last of her. And, Mary," she added, turning to me, "if you'll take a fool's advice, you'll give up your place and go back with me."

I thought it better not to take a fool's advice; so to turn it off, I said, "But what's the matter? Is Mrs. Lawson taking to caps—and to French caps, too?"—for high-crowned caps, like those I had seen worn by some of the nurses in the garden of the Tuileries, were lying on the table.

"Bless you, no!" put in Biddy; "it's her masther is taking to caps! Sarah's trouble is that she has a misthress that won't wear caps, and a masther that buys all the new shapes he comes across."

Sarah said this was quite true. "All the way as they came through what was called Normandy, a stopping to look at old churches (as she could see nothing in them to make a fuss about, except that some of them had got good comfortable pews, as put you in mind of your own country), if ever the master saw a woman with something on her head as looked as if she were set to frighten the crows, he must go and buy one like it, and dear they made him pay. Missis might have had real lace, and plenty of it for the money, and, will you believe me? when we came here he got Madame Charles to buy him a milliner's head-block, and when he has people to tea, he makes me pull out first one 'ideous, ridic'lous fright, and then another, and arrange it on this doll without a body." Here Sarah held up the head-block. "Not but what I will say it has a pretty face of its own," added she, looking at it affectionately. "It's not so red in the face as they make them in England, and more genteel-like in its features; but to think of an old clergyman like Mr. Lawson taking to dressing dolls! It makes me mad, it does, to stand by and change the caps, and hear him talk by the hour that 'this is the cap of Rouen, and this the cap of Coûtances, and how curious it is to find

each head-dress once, in its turn, the fashion of the French courts in the Middle Ages, lingering in some out-of-the-way corner, as queer old bonnets of the fashion of many years ago still linger among old women in remote villages in England.' I know it all better than any of his sermons, I've heard it so often. He expects to pick up a great many more, more 'orrid still, before he gets to Bordeaux; but it will make me stare if he matches this," said the injured Sarah, holding up a cap with large flaps or wings of white muslin, which were stiffened out from the front so as to meet at the back of the head.

This winged cap was the largest I ever saw. I said it was so strange that it was fit for a museum. Sarah told me that it was the cap worn at a village near the city of Coûtances. Her master had seen a woman, " wearing that 'ideous hobject as you 'old in your 'and," come out of a roadside cottage. He at once stopped the carriage, and asked this peasant where he could buy a head-dress like her own. Finding no shop was near at hand, he bid for the cap on her head. She was so flattered or so simple, that she hardly knew how to make a charge, but, would you believe me? master said that cap was ' priceless.' "

While Sarah went to get leave to go with us, and Biddy to look for M. Ernest, Jeanne and I turned over the caps. They were all new to her, and she thought

them almost as odd as we did. I found some of them were made to keep their queer shapes by a framework of wire, and others were stretched over cauls and high crowns of thin blue pasteboard, which both showed off the patterns of the lace and kept them erect.

A little noise of laughter and struggling was heard in the next room, and Harry Dennis, lathered up to his eyes, and wet up to his elbows, was brought in by a good-looking young man with a large moustache. Biddy, coming in by another door, hailed him as Ernest, and screamed at the child, "Oh, the bad boy, he's been shaving again!"

Ernest, mixing French and English, told her that Miss Dennis had sent him to seek the little boy who had strayed from her room. He had found him in Mr. Lawson's dressing-closet, holding his own little nose between his own small finger and thumb, and scraping his chin with an ivory paper-knife, trying to copy Mr. Lawson, whom he had often watched while shaving.

"And it's not the first time *he's* been after it, though he'll not be five years old for six months to come," said Biddy, half proud of her nurseling, "and it's my big scissors I've had to hide, for he begged them to make believe with when Mr. Lawson locked up his razors; and now I'll tell the aunt if you do it again, Masther Harry, for it's masther I'm to call you, now I'm under the yoke of the Saxon."

Harry, nettled that Ernest should speak of him as "little," first wriggled out of his arms, retorting that he (Ernest) was "too big;" then promised Biddy that he would "never do it no more, only on Sunday-days. He was growing up a man and must shave on Sunday-days, and wear a pretty coat with buttons, as Dr. James did, and Biddy ought to let him shave on his 'happy day' (by which he meant his birthday), and she ought to make Nora let him have a 'happy,' for Nora *would* say her 'happy day' came before his did."

"Bless the child!" said Biddy, "be a good boy, and keep away from the soap and water, and you shall have as many birthdays as you like. Make much of them while you're little, say I; you'll be none so keen after them when you're grown up. Now, Ernest, your captain is going out herself, and does not want you; so you may go with these young women that wish to learn their lesson that they'll all have to say some day, and mind *you* attend to the good praste's discoorse to the husband."

Ernest took off his apron, was ready in a minute, and walked with us down the street. I thought I had never met with a more polite young man. Though there were three of us, he had something civil to say to each, in French or English, and did not overlook me; though I, being slender and of a middle size, was nearly lost between two such tall girls as Jeanne and Sarah. The

cook was stout to match her height, but she was a quiet girl, keeping herself pretty much to herself, while Sarah had a mincing manner, and reared up her long, slender neck in a way that put me in mind of some wild creature I had seen in a show. Others had the same thought; for Biddy told me the waiters at the hotel called her "la girafe Anglaise," that is, the English camelopard.

When Jeanne had made out that Ernest liked towns better than a country life, and Nantes better than Tours, which he thought "too tranquil," she lost all interest in him as a man whom she might marry, and withdrew into herself, to regret in silence that fickle person who might have saved her all the trouble of cooking.

She even said afterwards, "that she could hardly make out what M. Ernest said; those Nantes people had such a droll, thick way of speaking. On the other hand, I had never had much fancy for Mrs. Lawson's Sarah; but still I did not think she had it in her to put herself so forward as she did that morning to a young man she had never seen before. It was, 'What do you think, Mr. Ernest?' 'And what is your opinion?'—till I was tired of hearing her. She must tell him how she had been plagued with 'them nasty caps,' and dwelt on how frightful they were, till I, thinking this not very civil to the French, and a little out of humour with her, for letting no one put a word in but herself, said that, for

my part, I had had much the same thoughts when I was new to the country, and what I might call 'raw and green,' if such words were not low; but that now I saw the truth of what Mr. Lawson said, 'that you needed some time to get educated to the ways of a strange country.'

"It was just like the French language," said I; "when I first heard it I used to strain my ears to listen till I got a headache, and it all seemed harsh sounds, without sense. Now, I catch a word here, and two or three words there, without trying for them. They just sink into my ears, and their meaning with them, and I know they are just as much words with sense to them as our English are; barring that they are not so easy for me to copy in the saying. And as for the caps, my eyes are getting used to them. They are so clean and well got up, it's a pleasure to see them; and I think of wearing one myself when we settle down at Nantes; having been advised to do so by a friend, who says it's proper and prudent to follow the customs of the country."

"Well I never!" cried Sarah, craning her long neck. "It's a pity my mistress is suited already! I do believe my master would like to make all the poor servants in England wear them caps. I shall give the parish warning what they may expect when he goes back. But England is a free country, goodness gracious be praised!

I'll tell him of your views, and perhaps he may spare you some of his caps, if you want to make a hobject of yourself."

"I shall not go to such extremes!" said I, with spirit. "I shall buy one or two of these little close caps they wear at Tours."

"And look as if you had forgotten to take off your nightcap when you came down in the morning! I would pay sixpence to see you."

Jeanne looked puzzled, for our voices were raised, and Sarah, at least, had become red in the face, and tossed her poor head till, if she had had any brains inside it, they must have become soft with so much shaking.

"Miss would adorn any head-dress," said Ernest. "I hope to see her in one so flattering to my self-love as a Frenchman. Miss shows she knows how to live. Each country has its customs. You have 'The Box,' in which I made a point of taking lessons while in London, and the aille-beer, and the porter-beer, and the Chestar-cheese, to which I accommodated myself with ease. And you have the good beef, but you do not know how to lard it."

I could not convince M. Ernest that it was only the lean, hard beef of France that needed strips of fat bacon to give it richness; so I let him have his say, and, in return for my seeming to yield, he remarked, with much

politeness, that he had "tasted sundry plum-puddings made in France, but on going to England had found they were but feeble efforts of the art of the kitchen. Not till he tasted a real English plum-pudding did he know how imperfect had been the idea he had formed to himself of that exquisite meat."

"And Yorkshire pudding," put in Sarah. "I am sure you must have liked that too?"

Ernest shrugged his shoulders. "That was an effort of England to produce an omelette of her own. Praiseworthy, but a failure."

This talk and our previous delay made us too late to see anything of the wedding. All had left the church but the sexton and some of his hangers-on, who were putting away a number of china vases and lilies with tinsel leaves, and flowers of glass, which had been set upon the altar to make it look pretty, and were now being stowed in cupboards made in the thickness of the church-wall. Jeanne began to think it high time she should go home to look after her soup-pot. So, as her way and mine were the same, we took leave of the polite Ernest and the mincing Sarah.

I found Mrs. Richards on the look-out for me. I was wanted to say what I knew of Mrs. Lawson's Sarah to a lady who, finding that she had notice to leave when the Lawsons reached Bordeaux, where they could put her on board of some vessel bound for England, had some

thoughts of hiring her to take care of children. (I said to myself, "That notice to leave accounts for Sarah's bad tempers and rude remarks this very morning!") My mistress adding that the lady was Miss Dennis, led the way into the room where Biddy's "Jineral" was sitting.

She was still a young lady, with thick, light curls, blue eyes, and a very pink and white skin; pleasant to talk to, and civil, but with an active eye and a firm way of speaking. She was at me in a moment with "What sort of person was Mrs. Lawson's maid? Correct in all respects in her conduct? Of a nice temper? Clean, industrious, and clever with her needle? An early riser? Fond of children? Truthful, patient, healthy, and a good hand at dressmaking?"

I drew my breath.

"You hesitate. Pray speak out. I shall only be led by what you say, so far as it confirms my own judgment; and of course I shall speak to Mrs. Lawson. I should have done so before coming here, but I found she was engaged; so that I might lose no time, I came here."

Now, it was not just the moment for me to be asked what I thought of the giraffe; but I knew better what was right than to injure any one who was a servant like myself, so I said that I had seen little of her, but

that she had a great name for being a clever servant. Indeed she had, for she gave it to herself; but *that* I did not say.

Mrs. Richards, who knew my looks, said if she were so useful, it seemed odd her mistress should part with her.

"The young woman," said Miss Dennis, "tells me that it is Mr. Lawson, who wishes to have a young girl from Tours to keep up his child's French. From what she dropped, they seem to be unlike other people. I don't like these out-of-the-way notions. Of course I shall hear what they have to say. You see, if I take Sarah, I can part with that Irishwoman. A more unfit person in every way to be with children, you can hardly fancy. One must pity her, of course. It is time she was with her own. My brother has had too much in hand to look after these poor children; but I shall turn over a new leaf."

"And tear out a good many old leaves, and loosen the binding!" said my mistress, as Miss Dennis went. "Just the same Katharine Dennis she was at school! Now, John, I won't have you fall in with her plan that we should all go to Nantes as one party. Do, for once, let us travel without some one hanging about us like a millstone. I know Katharine. If she goes with us, we shall not have a bit of our own way all through the journey. So don't be good-natured this time."

"My dear Anne, I don't know when I've seen you so fierce!"

"I was at school with her," said my mistress.

So it was settled we should leave as soon as we could engage three good places in the diligence, and that we should compound with Miss Dennis by offering to look out rooms for her in Nantes.

As it chanced, Miss Dennis fell ill. Her rapid journey, change of diet, and over-zeal to put the children and Biddy to rights, knocked her up. She was forced to take to her bed, whence my mistress took her orders to look out and see all the lodgings in the city of Nantes, select the most likely to suit, and be ready to point them out when Dr. James thought her fit to travel.

In the outer room, Biddy, who had had notice to leave, said things I had better not write about. The pain of parting with her nurslings seemed, however, to be quite done away with by joy at the thoughts of getting free from their aunt.

Mr. Lawson could not but express his mild wonder that Miss Dennis should have engaged his wife's maid, who spoke English so badly, and could do nothing thoroughly, when, for the same wages, she might have nired a first-rate needlewoman with a pure French accent. He bid us good-bye, not without hoping we should all meet again.

My mistress some time afterwards had a letter from

his wife, in which she said their luggage had proved such a trouble that, on reaching Bordeaux, Mr. Lawson shipped his packages to England, and began afresh to collect every odd old thing that came in his way. She liked Pau, and found herself gaining strength; but Mr. Lawson said 'it was as bad for the accent as it was good for the lungs.' Well, he was a good gentleman, and always took off his hat to me when I met him in the streets, and Sarah said he did the same to the poorest in his parish.

Leave was taken of Miss Goodman, who, under the care of Mrs. James, was being brought to look (in point of dress) about as much like a Frenchwoman of Tours as a Frenchwoman of Tours looks like one of Paris; and of Master Tom, who seemed in better humour with the place, and was fast becoming a kind of leader among the English and American lads of his own age. He told me, in his off-hand way, to drop him a line to say if Nantes were jolly; in which case he might run down to take a look at us; and he gave me a box of sweetmeats to eat on the journey, and begged me not to fret too much at parting from him.

Leave was taken of Mrs. James, who said how much she wished she were able to live in England. This she always said when English people were leaving Tours; but she did not mean it. She had fallen into a way of life that suited her. She liked to sit, nicely dressed,

on her sofa, and listen to the prattle of her French droppers-in, who amused her, and talked her share and their own.

"She was quite a Frenchwoman!" said the other English ladies.

They were wrong, for most Frenchwomen earn the pretty dresses and little pleasures of the evening by the morning's close and constant watch over the soup-pot and the frying-pan, by a checking of every sou, a making each poorest morsel of food or clothing yield its utmost, of which scarce one Englishwoman in a thousand has any notion.

Leave was taken of Dr. James, who had something hearty about him which made my master and mistress press him to come to visit them wherever they might be living. He said he should be sure to find them out, if in England, the next time he went to see his friends. Mrs. James "doubted whether she could ever trust him to go to England again without her. He stayed away so long that last time, did her commissions so very badly, and did nothing but grumble at the French living, and need blue pills for so many months after his return."

"Never heed her, Richards," said the doctor; "when my stomach takes its fit of home-sickness, as it does once in two years for certain, I'll find you out, and Mary shall put it to rights with plum-pudding. I often think of the poor German princess who married the brother of

King Louis XIV., and fell ill on the light French cookery, and had to send for sour cabbage and uncooked ham and sausages to restore the tone of her stomach."

All was now said and done, and one morning we started. It was not till we got some little way out of Tours that we saw the full extent of the havoc wrought by that great flood. Hedges had been carried away, trees torn up and tossed over fields so covered with sand from the bed of the river, that you could not see any trace of the young wheat growing there ten days before. Whole vineyards were rooted up, nothing remaining but a few stubborn old stumps. In some places great gulleys were left, showing that the river had made itself new channels or short cuts from point to point. Many houses still stood deserted, and all looked so dismal and forlorn, that it was a comfort to think that at Angers we should leave the diligence and go on by steamboat. It was better to be on the river than to be looking at the waste it had made on land. A farmer from near Angers, travelling with us, smiled when my mistress said something of this kind, and told her it would be very good for the *chanvre*, or hemp-plant, which is much grown on the lowest ground by the Loire. There would be a fine crop next year.

"Yes," said my master, "the Loire is somewhat like the more famous Nile. It gives even more than it takes. I have heard of very high rents being paid for land so

placed that the high waters of the Loire overflow them, and leave a thick layer of mud behind; and an island, such a little island as is very common in the river, is worth a deal of money."

The farmer confirmed this, but added it would not do him much good. He grew flax. Floods were not so good for flax as for the hemp-plant.

"I am glad they are good for anything," said my mistress, "for it is quite sad to see these pretty banks, which I used to think more pleasant than those above Tours, so ravaged and desolate."

Saumur, the only town between Tours and Angers, looked as if all the corn of the province must be ground there, if you might judge from the number of windmills perched on the high ridge of cliff overlooking the town. Our farmer had been born at Saumur, and brightened on seeing his clean and lively town. It was not, he told us, dull and dismal like dark old Angers, known all over France as the black town, and a nest for men with minds and plans as dark as their grimy skins or the smoke from their chimneys.

"There," he said, "they forged plots as well as iron. It was the centre of a secret society of all the hot heads of Anjou. Now, at Saumur, all was gay and frank. Soldiers from the great cavalry school dashed about the white streets all day long on horses so fine it was enough to set you dancing to see them."

"Angers still keeps up its old repute," said my master to his wife. "You remember Shakspeare speaks of the 'saucy walls' of that 'contemptuous city.' Now, Mary, you'll think you're back in Lancashire before night."

Sure enough, as we came near the slate and coal works before you enter Angers, we began to see men of a rougher mould, with hard and weather-beaten faces, such as you would see about Newcastle-upon-Tyne. My master said that the north of England face was even more common about Poitiers, but that it would take his friend, Mr. Lawson, to say whether the Poitevin and Angevin blood had got to the top in some English districts as the oil rises in the mixing of your salad, or whether England had the better of Poitou and Anjou.

All he could tell was that there must have been enough coming and going between the two provinces and England in the times when all three were under one lord, to account for the great likeness in face and figure, and some traits of character.

You now approach Angers by a fine boulevard, through a new town, but there was nothing of the kind when we alighted at an old inn, laid out like that first hotel in Paris where we were so nearly blown up, but much darker and more dirty. It is now pulled down, but, such as it was, we took a good night's rest in it. Next morning we saw the old castle, now turned into barracks; I thought I had never beheld one so striking, or that

gave you such a feeling of what fierce times it must have seen, and what high-handed doings. It seemed to hold up its head as if to say it had had its own share in what we should call crimes nowadays, and did not feel sorry, but rather scorned us and our petty little modern notions. My master leaned against that part of the castle-wall whence there is a grand view of the river, and part of the town lying far below, and taking out his Shakspeare read the scene from King John, in which the kings of France and England meet as enemies "before the gates of this rebellious town," each calling upon the townspeople, "Ye men of Angers, open wide your gates!" but the "men of Angers" reply from their "flinty walls," in a very sensible manner, that the two kings had better fight it out, and see which is the master before Angers lets either of them in.

Next, we went on board the steamboat, and liked the river better in its proper place. One good came of the late flood, that there was no risk of our running aground, which often happens when the Loire is shallow. We passed many barges, if you could give such a name to what were but little above rafts—shallow, flat-bottomed boats roughly put together to carry grain to the port of Nantes, and bring back English coal to the towns lying up the Loire. Slight as they were, being but a few planks held together by a few nails, there were not many in which the master had not run up a cabin under

the long steering-pole which is attached to the rudder, and worked by means of ropes. The wife, in her Saumur cap, peeped in and out, with an eye for the soup-pot and an eye for the river.

"Look at them," said my master. "It puts me so much in mind of the Dutchmen and their wives on the canals in Holland. Much of the comfort and cheapness of living down here depends on these boats, and they depend on the river. One year it is too shallow to float them, and another so swollen that they cannot come through the bridges. My old friend the Loire is, what those ruffians of the great Revolution called him—a 'revolutionary torrent.' He comes from the neighbourhood of snowy mountains, with so great a fall that he runs himself dry in summer, splitting into many channels and leaving many islands in his course. In rainy seasons he rises with as much haste. Our captain tells me that he should not wonder if the port of Nantes were frozen if this cold weather lasts."

It seemed strange to come to France, and so far to the south-west of France, to hear of ships being frozen up in their harbour, but before many days the flag was hoisted to warn vessels lying in the port of Nantes not to change their berths, on account of the risk from the ice that came floating down the river. At St. Florent we saw a tall column by the church on the steep bank of the river, put up to the general of the brave gentlemen,

farmers, and peasants of La Vendée, Bonchamps, who died there of wounds received in battle against a rabble who murdered their king, and all but made a law that there was no God. My master told us such stories of the horrors of cruelty committed by these wretches of the Revolution, who made the noble river, that minister of health and long life, breed a pestilence, choking it with the corpses of men, women, and children, whom they drowned because they could not behead them fast enough, that, long as I have lived in Nantes, I can never look at the old sugar warehouse on the quay, where they scarcely had patience to hold some short mockery of a trial before dragging their victims to be drowned, without a shudder and a wonder that there can still be life in streets that have seen such things.

As you approach Nantes by the river, the cathedral, which from many parts of the town can hardly be seen, rises up before you like a cliff. When you draw nearer still, the castle comes in between you and the great church.

Our boat stopped at a wharf above the first stone bridge, where there is now a wide and handsome quay. At the time of which I speak, however, the Loire ran nearly up to the walls of the castle, which looked much higher than it does now. A man with a blue *blouse* and huge, noisy *sabots*, or wooden shoes, put our luggage on a wheelbarrow, and we followed him for a short

distance through the oldest part of the town, then up some steep modern streets.

We came out in a square named from the theatre,* which stands in it, and entered a large and well-built hotel, which I thought handsomer than either of those where we stayed when in Paris. I heard my master say that this hotel had been much talked of in its time, and that old people in Nantes who remembered it just before the Revolution could never be brought to believe but that it was still the finest in France, and, therefore, in the world. Such as it was, I felt quite lonely and lost

* Arthur Young, who made a sort of "British farmer's" tour in France just before the great Revolution, was so much struck with what was then the newly-built quarter of the town, that it may interest some readers in Nantes, at any rate, if I copy an extract from his travels:—"The town has that sign of prosperity of new buildings which never deceives. The quarter of the Comédie is magnificent, all the streets at right angles, and of white stone. I am in doubt whether the Hôtel de Henri IV. is not the finest inn in Europe. Dessein's at Calais is larger, but neither built, fitted up, nor furnished like this, which is new. It cost 400,000 livres (£17,500) furnished, and is let at 14,000 livres (£612 10*s.*), with no rent for the first year. It contains sixty beds for masters, and twenty-five stalls for horses. Some of the apartments of two rooms, very neat, are six livres a day; one good room three livres; but for merchants five livres per diem for dinner, supper, wine, and chamber, and thirty-five sous for his horse. It is, without comparison, the first inn I have seen in France, and very cheap. It is in a small square, close to the theatre, as convenient for pleasure or trade as the votaries of either can wish. The theatre cost 450,000 livres, and lets to the comedians at 17,000 livres a year; it holds, when full, to the value of 120 louis d'or. The land the inn stands on was bought at nine livres a foot; in some parts of the city it sells as high as fifteen livres."

in it. There was not a woman to be seen among the servants, nor anyone speaking even a little English, except the landlady, who sat at her desk, in her little bureau, or office, near the entrance, making up accounts.

Next morning it seemed a good thing we had rooms to find for Miss Dennis. My master said "we must indeed be at a loss for something to do if we welcomed such a troublesome undertaking. If he had been present he should have tried to hold my mistress back from engaging to find anyone lodgings in Nantes—such lodgings, at least, as were suited to English tastes. He advised my mistress to sit still until he had seen his old friend, the English consul, who could tell him more about such matters than anyone besides." Mr. Richards kept my mistress waiting for a long time. His excuse, when he did return, was that he had "looked in at the early Bourse (or Exchange), to shake hands with some of his old friends. Trade was dull, and there was nothing doing but weddings. Several were being negotiated, but he had only heard one bargain struck. That was between two old fellows whom he knew very well. One of them said to the other, 'I will give my son so many hundred francs a year if you will give the same to one of your daughters, whichever you like. They are all charming, and well brought up, and my son is not a bad lad.'"

"Whereupon they shook hands, which is always done

on the Bourse to complete a bargain. After shaking hands, you are bound in honour to fulfil your contract, to deliver your stuff, be it grain or wives. Yes, my dear, it is all true, so you need not look as if you thought I was dealing in fiction. The fact is, trade is very flat just now, and at Nantes, when they cannot do business on a grand scale, they do on a small one, or, as they would say, *en détail.* So as soon as an amazing number of papers can be filled up, Mademoiselle Such-an-one, who has seldom seen the streets of Nantes except from the windows of the omnibus which goes round the city every morning to pick up all the young ladies and set them down at their day schools, and fetch them back in the evening, as much watched as if they were Eastern women, will be turned by the mayor and the priest into Madame So-and-So, a partner in a new firm, with an equal share of the capital and profits, and a keen eye to the carrying on of the business."

I said nothing, but I could not but remember how Biddy, in her little retail way, tried to make up matches for all about her. Before she knew that Sarah would take her place, Biddy had told me she should make a match for the giraffe as well as for me. She should charge a commission to Sarah, but as I was Irish, and a friend, she should think herself repaid for her trouble by being bidden to the dance and supper after the wedding.

My master now was as quick to set us on the move

as I, for one, had thought him slow to return, and give us some change. He had been told of a newly-built house where several apartments stood empty, but only by a lucky chance, for they were commonly in much request.

Here I must stop to say that, before I went to France, I thought an apartment just meant a room, whereas it means a suite of rooms, in which one set of people may live apart from the others in a house, a little house within a house—your own part or share in a common stock. I wished I had had this little bit of knowledge when I used to have my quarrels with a cook who gave herself great airs of reading, and who was in the habit of telling me to "keep to my own apartment, and keep out of hers," by which she meant the kitchen. Well, it was too late to correct that cook. She had "declined the kitchen," and set up in the more genteel profession of "renovating ladies' bonnets," some years before I left England.

We found three apartments vacant in a very high new house. One, that on the first floor, my master at once thought he had better take for ourselves; Miss Dennis, of course, would not pay the money asked for it. My mistress liked the rooms, but said if Katharine were to take cheaper rooms above us, we should be much too near neighbours.

"I do not believe it would make a bit of difference,"

said my master; "I give her credit for being a woman of so much action, that she would descend upon you from her tower, up here on the hill, were I to take you a house outside the barrier. So, as you must fight for your own freedom of action, anyhow, let the fight be fought here, as in a sawpit, with our Mary and her Sarah having their little mutual skirmishes, and pulling of caps, by way of backing their leaders."

I did not, I must say, quite like this little joke about "pulling caps," because I had that very morning asked my mistress if she should object to my wearing a cap out of doors, like other servants in France, as I had been told I should be better respected if I did so. She replied that she should not have thought of urging me to do so, and since it was my own wish, she should not only agree, but assure me that she thought it much more becoming to me than any bonnet; but when Mr. Richards saw me in a Sunday cap of lace, trimmed with pink ribbons, which I put on because I was to follow him and my mistress, he asked me at whom I was "setting my cap." Some gentlemen do get into a silly habit of joking.

My mistress gave in about hiring the apartment, and then we went upstairs to look at the rooms on the floor above ours, which were the next in price. There was still a story vacant, that at the very top of the house, which we must also mount to see. What a journey we

did have up those stairs! I gave up counting the steps after I reached one hundred.

The landlady, who seemed very wishful to let this apartment, put aside all things that could be said against it, in her ready French way, and made much of the purer air you got into by climbing so high, and of the fine view of the river and port. A cord was hanging from the window-frame, to which she drew our notice as to something that almost made up for the grievous number of steps. "To that cord the postman tied the letters, to that cord numberless parcels could safely be trusted. It was equal to a servant was that cord!"

In spite of the comfort that hung on that string, my mistress said that, if she were Miss Dennis, she should never bring children up to that story.

"Think of it, John!" said she. "The poor things would be tired before they had a run. They would never be fit to mount such stairs after they had tired themselves in a healthy way in the open air."

"My dear, children never do have 'a healthy run' here. They sit in pretty clothes under a tree on sunny days, just as you saw them do in Paris, and each little lady (under ten) takes care that her frock be not *chiffonné*, which is a word full of expression, meaning not merely flattened or crumpled, but treated with no more respect than if it were a rag. Besides, this is such a town for rain that fine clothes can't afford to breathe

the fresh air every day in the week. I declare it's raining now, and only my umbrella among three people, and you in that new Paris bonnet, at which I saw every woman who passed you turn round to gaze, and Mary in a 'novelty of the season' quite equal in its own way! What made you forget that this is one of the rainiest towns in Europe? Well, there is one comfort, I can always hire you umbrellas for a few sous."

So saying, he led us to the shop of an umbrella maker, who, asking "if we wished to hire umbrellas by the day or the hour," gave us our choice among a number, of all colours from bright red and blue to modest brown. This struck me at the time as something very droll, but it shows how rainy the place must be when a new branch of *commerce en détail* has been found out to supply its peculiar needs.

Next day brought a letter from Miss Dennis to ask my mistress to take rooms for her in our hotel. Though she was not quite well, it had become so cold that she thought it best to travel while the roads were free from snow. She was, besides, so harassed with the bickerings between Sarah and Bridget, that the latter should leave at once on reaching Nantes. Miss Dennis thought, besides, that she had best be on the spot, as she must hire her own furniture, and engage a cook.

"So must we," said my master. "What do you say to Biddy for ourselves, as a kind of help for Mary?

Though she is so crippled, she is full of life and vigour, and worth half a dozen Sarahs. Besides, she knows every inch of the town, and can speak French for Mary."

On talking it over, the things to be said in favour of my master's plan seemed so many more than could be said against it, that, though I knew Biddy had her faults, and thought it likely she might have more of them than she had, as yet, let me see, I fell into it with a good grace.

You see, after Tours, where I heard so much English spoken, and sat down to my meals with English servants, and foreign ones, many of whom could speak a little English, my heart quite sank within me to sit down here and talk in dumb show, with scarce a woman to look at.

Peeping about, I found there were three women on the premises, besides the landlady, and a spinster who helped her, and seemed to have the power of scolding in all corners of the house, on all subjects, at one and the same time. Of these three, one had charge of the linen, and had a little room to herself, where she sat all day long darning sheets. Two I could see from my window, as from my window at the Tours hotel I used to see two shrivelled old women exactly like them, and doing the very same work; that is to say, paring carrots and turnips, and creeping about with saucepans. They were

not nearly so old as they looked, but hard work, poor living, and a hot sun, had dried them up betimes.

The Giraffe used to call these poor hangers-on of the kitchen "the old 'ags," and laugh at the coloured pocket-handkerchiefs they twisted round their white hair by way of head-dress. They ate in the courtyard, sitting on a bench outside the kitchen, and slept in any corner.

I used to wander round them sometimes, wishing I could speak to them, and say something friendly; but they did not look unhappy, and seemed to relish their meals, which were chiefly of dry bread and raw artichoke leaves, or slices of raw onion steeped in the common white wine, and picked out with the point of a knife.

Servants in France do not sit down to so many long and regular meals as they do in England. At hotels, where strangers' servants must be fed, there is more form than in private houses. On the other hand, where the hotel servants sleep is a puzzle. "In any corner, and in all corners," they say themselves. Some time in the day, every waiter makes a rush to his hairdresser's to have his hair and beard arranged. That shop is his dressing-room; thus he makes light of dragging his mattress into any dark closet he may be lucky enough to seize for his own, or of rolling it out on the landing nearest to the entry, so as to be ready to start up when he hears the clatter of the diligence.

There was now no want of something to do. Furni-

ture was to be chosen and hired, and our rooms were to be made to look a little less cold and scantily furnished than is the case with French rooms in winter. They are all got ready for hot, clear weather and sunshine, as are ours in England for frost, fog, and rain. When a very warm season surprises us, we are overcome with our carpets, and a cold winter abroad with the patch of carpet in the middle of the bright-rubbed floor, just of the size of a quilt, and the street front with as much of windows to wall as we have of wall to windows, cuts to the marrow us poor people, who dream that France knows of nothing but light and warmth.

Among other errands, we dived into the old part of Nantes, hard by the landing-place of our steamboat, to let Biddy's mother know that she might look for her daughter's return. This Miss Dennis asked us to do, and we did it. She had also asked us to seek some place for Ernest till her brother made up his mind as to whether he should remain in Spain, in which case he should send for Ernest, or come to Nantes and take a house, keeping Ernest as cook and his own servant. Likewise she desired us to look out a cook for her, who must be English, if such a person could be found in Nantes.

"I should have thought she had had enough of Mrs. Lawson's maid," said my mistress; for the rest of the letter was full of complaints of Sarah, who fancied herself very ill, and was so helpless that Miss Dennis had

not been able to send Biddy home by herself, as she should have wished.

My master said "Ernest must find a place for himself, and Miss Dennis a cook for herself. We had sought an apartment for her. He would show her the best shops, take her rooms in our hotel, and meet her at the diligence. No more would he do. If she went on like this, she would be worse than the donkey, hams, and cheese."

Still we did go in search of Biddy's friends. Her mother was out, but we gave our message to the chief person in the house, a monthly nurse, whose sign hung over the door. This was a full-length portrait of herself in her Sunday clothes, carrying a smartly-dressed infant out for its first airing. I thought this droll, but before we had done rambling through the streets, I saw the sign of another of the trade, which depicted her as giving a newly-born baby its first washing.

My mistress said it was the custom all over France for these nurses to show their calling by signs of this sort.

The nurse pointed out Biddy's children coming at full speed up the street from the school of the Christian Brothers. They were fine boys, plump and rosy, full of pride at showing us the books they had won as prizes at school. They could not speak many words of English, and wore little blue *blouses* and wooden shoes. My mistress said, "if they were in Ireland, they might be

taller and have more muscle, but they would be in rags. Here, the talk of the neighbours, the feeling of those about them, quite stopped all that. However poor clothes might be, in France they must be mended."

Miss Dennis wrote to fix the day when we should see her. It was too cold for her to break the journey by taking the boat at Angers as we had done. My master got up early on a bitter morning to meet her diligence. It was due at six, and we watched its office in the square till noon before it rolled in with less than its usual spirit, nothing fresh or life-like about it but the new driver and fine horses taken on at the last stage. The guard and passengers were worn out by a night's toiling through the snow. Biddy, the only one inside who seemed to have any good left in her, shrugged and winked at me, glancing at a flabby Sarah crumpled in a corner, and put one by one into my arms Harry and Nora, cross and so tired that they reeled when I set them down. M. Ernest, half-frozen, and wet half-way up to the knees, made a gallant attempt to come down from the *banquette* in a handsome manner, but was so numb that he missed his footing, and fell on the pavement. However, he quickly rose, throwing us a pleasant smile to show he did not mind it, and in a moment was at work, helping Miss Dennis to look after her boxes, and a Sarah as helpless as the other luggage. They must have had a weary night of it.

After leaving Saumur, they found the road heavy with snow. In some places the diligence fairly stuck in snow-drifts, and all the male passengers had to alight and help to push the wheels; in others, where there had been a thaw, the highway was one sheet of ice. Horses and men were taken by surprise. The horses were not roughed, and most of the passengers wore those thin and shining boots in which Frenchmen love to pace the pavement. Their great delay was at a hill not far from Angers. The diligence could make no progress up it, but stood still in a snow-drift till the *conducteur*, about two o'clock in the morning, made his way to a neighbouring farm, and brought back a yoke of oxen lent to help him out of his straits. My mistress took care of her little friend Harry. Miss Dennis saw Nora to bed, and then turned so faint that Biddy and I had to undress her and put her to bed as best we could. She was soon asleep, and then we performed the same office for the wailing Sarah, who took all manner of vows that, if she could but see herself back in her own country, she would never again leave it. Ill as she was and tired, and though she let us do all for her, she found time and strength to take a little spiteful notice of my cap, on which M. Ernest had also found time to compliment me between the diligence office and the door of the hotel.

"It's her cap *she's* been setting at him while she had you clear away!" said Biddy, shutting the door upon

her with a chuckle, "and now you've shown your Irish wit and stolen a march upon her with that smart cap of yours. She's cut out, and she knows it. No more walking about with Ernest here! He said as much to me himself. It did not matter in Tours, but in his own town he could not think of being seen walking with a young woman in a bonnet. He's kept us alive with being ready and willing, and the waiters gave him a good supper at the cook's shop for being a good fellow and helping them in their work, and such a kissing as he got from all of them all round when they said 'good-bye' to him; but I cannot stop now to tell you any more about us all. Now I've put two of my Saxon inimies to bed, I must go and see my own poor children. My mother paid a letter-writer to let me know that to-morrow there's a widding among our friends. You might come to it yourself, Mary, if you'd like to have your share of the fun. You'd have to bring some little matter of a prisent in your hand, but I'd buy a bargain for ye. I'll go meself to the Place de Bretagne and pick you up a second-hand saucepan or gridiron nate and chape."

I said that I could not be spared; we were too busy furnishing our lodgings, and (as my mistress had told me to do) I asked Biddy if it would suit her to engage to help me to cook and clean. Biddy went almost as wild with delight as she had done on that first morning

when I spoke to her at Tours. She seemed so ready and glad to work with me, that I passed over my offence at her supposing I had put on my French cap with a view of pleasing M. Ernest, and distancing the Giraffe.

Next day, just as I had helped Miss Dennis to dress, and led her, still pale and tired, down to the sitting-room, my master called us to the window, which he pulled open that we might go into the balcony and look at a sight in the square below. A wedding party of a score of people, headed by a fiddler who played as he went, was clattering across the middle of the square (no other word would express the noise made by their wooden shoes on the paving stones). The bride and bridegroom followed the fiddler in step with the music. The rest came two and two, young and old, each carrying a gift. I saw the gridiron, which might have been my gift, borne aloft by another hand. One waved a sweeping-broom, another flourished a poker, and so on, till you could count up most of the things needed in a very humble kitchen. Biddy, her old mother, and all her children in the best clothes they could muster, closed the rear. Biddy held a white wash-jug, her mother a basin, and the children the other parts of a chamber-service. I leave you to fancy the face of Miss Dennis, when Biddy looked up at me, grinning and brandishing her jug with a kind of triumphant flourish, copied by her children, who held up their own share of

the offerings with smiles of honest pride. My master laughed till the tears rolled down his cheeks.

"How Irish!" said Miss Dennis.

"How like Nantes!" replied Mr. Richards, when he could speak. "I've seen the same thing happen a hundred times. They always come through the most public square, and pretty nearly always carry the same things."

In spite of real weakness of body, Miss Dennis was a woman of so much spirit, and so wishful to cut short the expenses of hotel life, that before we, who had had a good start of her, were done furnishing our apartment, she had moved into the first above ours, and put it into nearly as good order at what she did not fail to tell us was a much less cost. She was also kind enough to explain to us which she found the cheapest shops, and how we might manage better if we had to furnish again. To be sure, her furniture was not so good as ours, but then it passed very well, and had even more show with it. We aimed at comfort and also at pretty good cooking, and it was plain she would save on that latter score.

My mistress and I laid in all kinds of dainty pans, and such a gem of a stove that I longed to cook a dinner over it with charcoal in the true French style; but just as our rooms were ready, the sleet-showers of Nantes, to be kept off by no umbrella, gave my mistress such a cold that we were kept two or three days longer in the hotel.

The first day she was laid up, I followed my master when he went down to the table-d'hôte breakfast that I might take my mistress up her tray as soon as he had chosen some dish from the table. I waited outside the dining-room, looking into the square to watch what was going on. While standing thus, whom should I see but our old friend, Mr. Lalor, who came riding up to our hotel, followed by a mounted gendarme. As soon as he caught sight of me he kissed his hand and took off his hat, giving it a flourish in the air. This would indeed have been flattering had it just been meant to show the pleasure it gave him to see me once more, but I soon found there was more in it than that.

Almost before I could hear what he said, he began to shout, "Where's your master, Mary? Do find him quick, my honey, and bring him to stand my bail! I'm a prisoner on parol, d'ye see? But they don't do things handsomely in this country, for first they take my word of honour, and then they make me pay a mounted policeman to ride along with me, and see that I have not a bit of a chance of breaking it. Mary, my good woman, don't go on talking at such a rate and stopping me. I'll hear ye another time. Where is your master?"

Mr. Lalor had heard himself talking fast, and thought it was I. My master, I told him, had just gone to breakfast.

"Then I'm just thinking I'd better do the same. Let

me see a stable! Point me out the way to the stables, my honey! Call your master out, my dear! Ask him to step this way for a minute to quiet the scruples of my friend here, who can't let me go out of his sight, I'm so precious in his eyes! I suppose I can't take him into the breakfast-room, though it would give me the grand air to have him standing at my back, changing the plates. I should be taken for a field-marshal, straight from Paris, with his aide-de-camp behind him. Now, my honey, do ask your master to step this way for one minute only!"

Before going, however, I would know a little of what was the matter.

"My honey," said Mr. Lalor, "it's some sort of a trifle of a murder I've been committing up in Paris when I fancied I was asleep in my bed at Pau. You have a kind Irish heart that will lean my way in such a matter, but these French are as priggish about it as if they were English, and it will take my friend Richards to settle them, so do run and fetch him!"

I soon brought out my master, who gave Mr. Lalor a hearty shake of the hand before the eyes of the gendarme, who at once seemed to comprehend that his task was at an end. On hearing that breakfast should be ordered for him, he allowed his prisoner to follow my master to the table d'hôte. As soon as it was over, the two, attended by the gendarme, went to the English consul, who took

them to the Town Hall. There a statement was drawn up, showing that Mr. Lalor was not the man for whom he had been taken. Papers were likewise prepared to be sent both to Paris and to the head of the police at the town where he had been arrested. After that, Mr. Lalor underwent a long rebuke from the chief of the Nantes police for "the contempt he had shown for the administrative arrangements of the French nation," in having suffered his passport to be worn away by constant friction in the pocket of his trousers.

This contempt the chief declared to be truly English. "Yes, M. le Consul, pardon me, if I say so, you English respect the laws of no country but your own."

The consul pleasantly remarked that he should think "it was the first time in his life that Mr. Lalor had been taken for an Englishman; that he, Mr. Lalor, came from a country where they held English laws in as little regard as any others." The chief then withdrew the word "English," saying that, if such were the case, he should merely call it "insular" contempt. "M. le Consul would admit that Ireland also was an island, would he not?"

This the consul could not deny, so Mr. Lalor stood rebuked for "insular contempt of the laws of a great empire."

"Dear me," said he, "if I had but known the value of that bit of paper, I'd have had something pasted at

the back of it to keep it together. I knew that it took a passport to get me into France, but I did not know it would take one to bring me out again."

He was cut short by the man in office, who told him that he must now pay the expenses of his gendarme, who must return at once to his own district and duties. This money Mr. Lalor laid down with a protest that "it ought to be charged to the county rates. He should call upon the government to make the county refund it, and pay him damages for false imprisonment besides. He had a cousin married to one of their French counts; a county magistrate, of course; he might be a lord lieutenant, for aught he knew. He should find him out, and lay the whole case before him." The chief, hearing Mr. Lalor mention the name of his cousin's husband, who was the head of an old Breton house, well known to be against the powers that were, shrugged his shoulders, sneered, and bowed the party out of his office. The consul was thanked, and the gendarme and his prisoner, who had become very friendly on the road over sundry cigars and little glasses of cognac, took a kind leave of each other. Then Mr. Lalor told my mistress what had befallen him, calling for me too to listen, as it was so long since he had heard English spoken, that the more people he set a talking the merrier.

"When I left you all at Orleans, I rode straight to Pau; there I found nothing but some letters lying for me

at the post office. One was from that branch of my family which ought to have been at Pau to meet me, as it said it would. Instead of that, it had left a letter stating that, when it reached Pau, it found there was a custom in that town of making you hire lodgings in advance for the whole winter, or of making you put up with very bad ones, or none at all. So that branch had gone on to Cannes, where it would be most happy to see me and my horse, if we would follow it. When I came to talk this over with a number of pleasant fellows from all countries, whom I met at the table-d'hôte, some of them said there was the very same custom of letting lodgings for the whole winter at Cannes and Nice, and they would most likely find all the good houses taken in advance wherever they went along that coast. So," said I, "I'll ride up to Nantes, where I have friends who can make out their plans better, and spend the winter alongside of them on more level ground than I find here."

"Nantes, Nan-tes," said a German (who made it a word of two syllables). "It is a busy town; I like Nan-tes."

"I think M. Lalor must mean Nancy," said a sort of countryman of mine, a kind of Irish-French officer, who spoke English pretty well, and had told me that his father had been one of the Irish patriots of '98, the same you call rebels, you know.

"Nantz, Nantes, or Nancy, it's all the same to me," said I. "I'll call a town by the name it likes best, just as I would do by a lady. Whichever is most agreeable to itself is the name for me. I suppose it is just like the old riddle, 'Elizabeth, Betsy, Bessy, and Bess,' three or four names for one person."

"My soldier drew me a fine picture of the camp at Nancy, 'set there to keep in check the Prussian boors.' 'There,' he said, 'I should find many exiles, like himself, following the glorious flag of France until they could again enter their own Ireland, 'free from sea to sea!'

"If they are like him, they must be nice young fellows, but know mighty little of their fathers' country. Would you believe me, Richards, he would not believe me when I denied that people in Ireland sometimes ate one another for hunger? Sir, he said I convinced him, but I know I did not. After that, it was a trifle that he thought we were brought down so low by the English as to be glad to wear the skins of a few wild beasts we killed in hunting. He was quite certain that, if it was not the case in Ireland, it was in Scotland, for he had seen an opera in Paris, in which a chorus of Scotch Highlanders came on the stage clothed in such skins.

"I talked, till I saw that if I said another word there would be a duel between us, and I thought of my duty

to my horse (who must be left in good hands, with competent means, before I attend to any selfish longings of my own to have things out with gentlemen); and I withdrew a little, and said 'it might be so. It had not come under my own notice; but I bowed to his better information.' He felt he did know better, and it all passed off in a pleasant way.

"I should wish some young fellows I know in Ireland to try the French for a year, and see if they liked them! After to-day I feel bound to tell them that they have had a fine time under John Bull, if they did but know it. They think they feel with the French, and the French feel for them, and the French think so too; but if some of our nice boys came together with these French, the mistake on both sides would soon be found out.

"I know some young fellows who have, what I may call, *print on-the-brain.* It's a new complaint. They read in the newspapers that they have been wronged before they were born, and ought to feel it. So they go home and try to feel very bad, and they have one sign of it, for certain sure—very bad tongues!

"Well, I should like to set them by my young soldier from Nancy. His father had just missed being hanged; but, if his general had told him, he would have ridden up into the middle of a meeting, and brought off O'Connell himself, with his green cap like the ancient crown

of Ireland on his head, and dragged him off to prison as 'an enemy of law and order.' He had been brought up to believe that he and the rest of the army came straight down from the skies to keep the law in its seat, the scales on their balance!

"At the last, a quiet man, who had not spoken a word all through the dinner, said 'he thought from what I said, it must be Nantes I wished to reach, not Nancy.' He pulled out a pocket-map, and showed me where the two towns lay. Nancy hard by Germany, and Nantes a few hundred miles south of Penzance, if you drew a straight line across the Channel. When I saw the river at Nantes was the same that ran at Orleans, then I knew that was my town, and thanked him for saving me from starting off on a wrong tack.

"I drew to this man, who knew more than the others about most things. He was in trade, and on his way to Bordeaux, riding like myself. He told me such strange things of the country he should pass through, that I took it into my head to go with him. He seemed very glad of my offer. 'A companion was what he should like of all things, for it was not at all pleasant, and (though that might be only fancy) he thought it hardly safe for a man to ride through the Landes alone.'

"Now, Mrs. Richards and Mary, he did not rob and murder me, as you might expect from this beginning, and it was not him I murdered, for which you, Richards,

bailed me this morning, and I thank you kindly, for letting me see the last of that fellow with the cocked hat.

"We left Pau (where I had to learn three new words of French, for they feed the horses there on Indian corn, and call it '*Maïs de Turquie*'), and rode on to Dax, and then through great plains of sand, where I saw the people walking on stilts, just as I had read of when I was a little boy. We came upon great plantations of cork trees, and large piles of cork in its different stages, from the bark just stripped from the tree, onwards.

"We had to put up at such huts as we could light upon, and pick up guides from one point to another. I wondered whether, if we were lost, the coroner's verdict would be that we perished by exposure on a moor or by smothering in a quicksand. The Landes have something of both, being like a dreary sea-coast, that the sea has not been on for a thousand years, and that has been trying to grow things ever since, without much success.

"Our poor horses had hard work to struggle through the sand, and man and beast were glad when they got upon the old paved post-road leading to Bordeaux. There, my friend put me in the right way for Nantes, and I bade him good-bye.

"Nothing happened till I came to a place not far from

here, called Bourbon-Vendée,* a little new town, built all at once by an order from Paris, some forty years ago, and filled with soldiers to keep down a set of as fine fellows as ever you saw. These Vendeans are, by what I can make out, a French kind of Irish patriots. Irish patriots turned the other way, you know; that is, they are so fond of their king and their laws that they turn out to fight those who want to change them.

"Well, I rode up a hill in the middle of a moor, and thought that, in all my life, I had never seen a town I should less like to live in. I turned into the court-yard of an inn, put up my horse, and took my seat at the dinner-table with a number of people who had come in by diligence. Just as we began to eat, in came a gendarme, who asked to look at the passports of those who had just arrived. The passengers made a great pulling out of papers; I went on eating my cabbage-soup. When the gendarme had done with the others, he asked for my passport. I shook my head to show I had not got one. He said 'Hein?' with an uncivil snort, and muttered something which I could not make out; but I dare say I was no loser by that. If I had understood him, I might have felt myself called upon to kick him, and if there's one thing I've found out in my

* First called "Napoléon-Vendée," from its founder, and as a hint to the district. Then "Bourbon-Vendée" on the return to kings of the old race. Now, once again, "Napoléon-Vendée." What next?

French travels, it is that you run a risk if you even smile at an official. I never saw fellows who would stand so little. One can chaff John Bull, you know, and that makes up for much.

"My gendarme went away for a few minutes, and then came back with another of his tribe. They were followed by the master of the hotel, who spoke a little English, and told me that, as I could show no papers, I should be bound to go with these gendarmes to the town hall. I took it all easy, and said I should first finish dining.

"My first gendarme did not refuse me leave to eat my dinner. He drew off to a little table in the corner of the dining-room, saying, 'Monsieur, I wait for you.'

"His comrade left us, but soon returned with a third of the same clan, who drew out a paper, over which the three put heads together, glancing at me from minute to minute.

"I made a better dinner than usual, lighted my cigar, and then told them I was ready for a walk. But when I came to the entrance from the street, and found that there was quite a crowd waiting to see me, and that one gendarme fell into place on my right hand, another on my left, while the third was about to walk behind me, I thought all this looked so uncommonly like being taken to prison, that I called upon the landlord to come along with me, and give his help like a Christian soul.

"I knew I had French enough to get me out of a French stable, but I was by no means sure it would have the same effect upon a French gaol.

"The landlord, who was looking at it all from his door-step, did as I asked him, and brought my saddle-bag, in which were letters that I thought would be of use. So off we marched, followed by all the little boys in the street. In that dead-alive town it was a godsend to see a man taken up by the police. I could only hope that what they thought I had done was not unworthy of a gentleman. Perhaps they thought I was Henry the Fifth come to stir up the Vendeans, as his mamma had done before him. In that case I make no complaint.

"When I reached the town-hall I found the head of the police, whom his men had sent for in a hurry, pacing up and down in great readiness for action. He said, in a solemn but civil way, how very sorry he was that a gentleman of my education should bring himself into a position so much to be regretted. I made him my bow, though I thought this was making a mighty fuss, and using very long words about wearing out an old passport in the pocket of an old pair of hunting-breeches. Then I told him it was done, and could not now be helped, but I would pay anything in reason for a new one, and let me hear no more about it. This made him look fierce. He set to work to scold me for trifling when under a serious charge. It was some time

before I could make head or tail of what he was pleased to call 'the grave affair;' but, by the help of my landlord, I did make out that two of our countrymen (I mean mine, Richards, not yours) had had a row up in Paris, and one of them had stabbed the other, killing him on the spot. The assassin had made off, and what they call a *signalement* of him had been sent all over the country. With this likeness I was told that my outer man matched beyond all dispute. They handed it to me. It was the same paper that I had seen my gendarmes reading while I dined. I took such a fit of laughter that I could not look at it steadily for some moments.

"The head of the police and his tail grew very wrathful; my landlord, who was not in buckram like these Jacks-in-office, grinned too.

"People in inns take a fairer view of their fellow-creatures than those whose only notion is that they must show their papers or be sent to prison. I saw I must make haste, and pull myself up, so I steadied myself as well as I could, and looked over the handbill from Paris.

"It was not a bad account of me, if you were to suppose it written by some one who had a wish to run me down. I do not deny that my eyes are blue and my whiskers red; my cheekbones too may be high, though they would find thousands higher in Scotland and

Ireland, so they need not have laid an unpleasant stress on such a trifle. My nose, they said, was *petit.* To this I made some demur.

"Should you call it 'little,' Richards?" asked Mr. Lalor, stroking his handsome straight nose in a kindly manner.

"I should say it was between the two extremes. If it had been meant that I should talk through it, or sing through it as the French do through their noses, or blow it, as they do theirs, with a louder noise than that made by any European nation, Mother Nature would of course have given me an instrument of a size and shape suited to such performances. She has not done so, and I do not complain of her omission. I did feel some longing to add to the size of the degenerate Roman nose of that official who ruled that my nose was small like that in his paper from Paris."

"'At least, sir,' said I, 'you'll allow that I'm some inches taller than the fellow I'm taken for?'

"As I stand six feet in my stockings, he could not but allow that there some mistake seemed to have been made, but added that, as the rest of the account tallied so well with my looks, that must be treated as a trifle.

"Then I fell back on my letters, which I made sure would settle the whole matter at once. I had one from my sister, addressed to 'Narcissus Lalor, Esquire, Poste Restante, Pau, Basses Pyrénées,' and one from

my banker, desiring that Narcissus Lalor should be supplied with any money he might require. This letter of credit on all the chief towns of France would, I thought, leave its mark on the thickest skull, and I handed it to the chief of police, telling him that to my mind it was worth half a dozen passports. So the landlord seemed to think also. My official grew a little more civil, but did not let go his hold of me for all that.

"He said there was no ill feeling against me; it was not even a matter which concerned the French nation. One Englishman had killed another, why or wherefore was no affair of his; but he had orders from the central office in Paris which must be carried out. I was to be held as under arrest until I could prove myself not to be the person for whom I had been taken. I found I could make no way with him, so asked if, instead of locking me up, he would let me ride on to Nantes, where I had some chance of finding a friend who could take his oath that I was myself and not some one else. There was a mighty pause over this, but at last he agreed to let me go, if I would pay for a gendarme to ride with me, and lodge me in gaol if the proofs that I was myself were not to hand. This the Consul calls treating me better than a Frenchman, without papers, would have a chance of being treated!

"Opinions differ on points of this nature. I had no choice; I must pay my keeper, or be locked up till I

could bring you down from Nantes. It was too late to go that night, even if my horse had been fresh, so we put up at the inn. If my gendarme had made a point of sleeping in the same room with me, I should have passed the night by the side of my horse, as I have done times without number; but I gave him a good supper, and he made his mind easy by sleeping in the passage outside my door. The joke of the inn was to call me Marshal Bugeaud, and him my orderly.

"As we rode out of Bourbon-Vendée together this morning, I saw a large building a little way out in the country. This I made out to be a lunatic asylum, the first I had seen outside a town since I came to France. It could not be filled for the same reason that they give at Killarney, namely, that 'the beauty of the scenery drives them all mad,' for if I had not seen the Landes I should have said this was the most barren and bleak country I ever saw. Perhaps that and the dullness of the town tell on their minds, and make them need so big a building. My keeper rode by my side, and we got on as best we could. He was not a bad fellow, though I think it is the first time I ever heard of a man having to pay for the guard set over him, and I must say that those gentlemen in Paris, before they indulged themselves in killing each other, might have stopped to reflect on what might be the consequences to an unoffending fellow-countryman; but this is a selfish

world, and people follow their own amusements without thinking of what may be the results."

For some time Mr. Lalor talked himself warmer every time he spoke of his arrest. He wrote to the Breton Count who had married his cousin, who, in reply, pressed him to pay them a visit, but assured him he had no chance of any redress. After that Mr. Lalor began to dwell upon the satisfaction he might obtain by fighting a duel. He balanced for long whether it would do him the most good to challenge the head of police at Bourbon-Vendée, or at Nantes. "One had doubted his word, and the other had sneered when he spoke of his relations in Brittany. Both had lectured him in an offensive manner. Still, he could not but see by the light of reason, and use of his logic, that neither would have done so had one of his unreflecting countrymen not killed another."

My master made bold to suggest they should arrange a four-cornered duel, after the manner of the three-cornered duel in one of Captain Marryat's novels.

Mr. Lalor inquired carefully into the arrangement of that famous fight, still, on the whole, he settled that, as he could not have fair play with French officials in their own country, it would be best to send a challenge to the criminal, in case he were not proved on his trial to be unworthy of the notice of a man of honour, and provided the law did not anticipate the vengeance of Mr. Lalor.

By the time we moved into our apartment, Mr. Lalor had found a lodging for himself, and a good stable for his horse, a little way outside the barrier of the octroi, where all things are cheaper than they are within it. He fell into his old regular habits of giving his horse food and exercise at stated hours, and formed new habits of sauntering with my master, for whom he had taken a great liking, about the streets and quays of Nantes. Thus he settled down to pass the rest of the winter in peace, which was only broken by a sort of running fight with the people of the octroi, who were for ever wanting to fine him fifty francs for bringing presents of country produce to us in the town, without first "declaring" them, and paying the tax on them. Till they knew him well, they would make out that he was going to sell them, and he was more and more strengthened in his distaste for French officials.

I think that Miss Dennis felt she had made a blunder in being in such a hurry to part with Biddy, though she was not a woman who would own her mistakes. She was always changing one Nantes cook for another, and always in a fret at the uselessness and fancied ailments of Sarah. I am bound to say we found her a less meddling neighbour than we had expected, and she looked well after the children, and made them happy and much better behaved.

Ernest went for a time to help the chief cook at our

late hotel. Biddy and I worked quite as well together as could be looked for, and so we settled down to spend what was to be to me but the first of many winters in France, with no greater troubles than the little jarrings which could not but occur between ways of living so different as those of the French and our own.

P.S.—My readers may remember, or guess, that I did marry in the end, and that I married a Frenchman, whose name was Ernest. How this came to pass, and the much greater haps and mishaps of our next year's journey, may be told, should a friendly public desire it, in another little book.

MARIE, FEMME TRÉVOREC
(*Née* MARY RYAN).

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